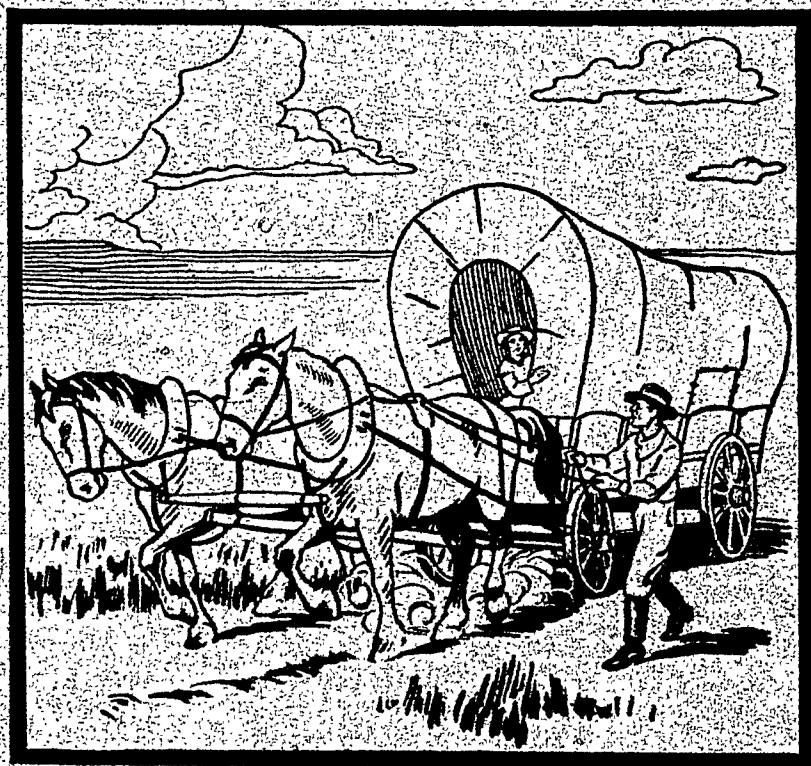


# THE ROMANCE OF THE PRAIRIE PROVINCES

**BURT**



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The end of steel.

--Courtesy of the Canadian Pacific Railway.

The Romance of Canada

The Romance  
of  
The Prairie Provinces

by

A. L. Burt, M.A. (Oxon)  
Head of the Department of History,  
University of Alberta

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## PREFACE

When we love anything, we cannot know too much about it, and love grows by what it feeds on. Of nothing is this truer than one's own country. This is why an interesting history is one of the greatest resources which a nation may possess. It inspires the soul of patriotism. No country is richer in this source of inspiration than is Canada, and of its story no part is more romantic than that of the Prairie Provinces. This is therefore of great value to all Canadians. But it is of greatest value to those who dwell in the North-West, because no one can really love his own country without loving some particular part of it, some part with which his life is intimately connected. This is my excuse for writing this little volume. If it fails to rouse some interest in, and affection for, this great Canadian North-West, it is not the fault of the story, but of him who tries to tell it.

Of the many friends who have been good enough to read and criticize the proofs, I am particularly indebted to my wife, to Professor A. S. Morton, head of the history department in the University of Saskatchewan, to Mr. J. F. Pritchett, lecturer in American history in Queen's University, and to Mr. John C. Saul of Toronto, all of whom have saved me from many a pitfall. I am also deeply grateful to the Public Archives of Canada for a large part of the illustrations. That a number of these are here published for the first time is due to the kindness of Dr. A. G. Doughty, the head of that invaluable institution, and of two members of his staff, Mr. Norman Fee and Dr. J. F. Kenney.

A. L. B.

The University of Alberta,  
October, 1929.



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# THE PRAIRIE PROVINCES

## CHAPTER I

### *From the Mountains to the Sea.*

From the snow-capped Rocky Mountains the land slopes down to Hudson Bay a thousand miles away. First come the foothills. Long ago, they were crumpled up by the great thrust which forced the mountains skyward. Then comes a vast plain. Its surface resembles that of the sea which covered it in ages past. Here it is level like calm water, and there it rolls like the ocean when a storm has passed by. These land billows become less frequent, and the wide smooth stretches grow more common towards the east. Just beyond the Manitoba lakes, the nature of the country changes, as the plain runs against the western arm of the V-shaped Canadian Shield that encloses Hudson Bay. The soil of the plain is the thick sediment deposited by the ancient sea, but here there is a confusion of rock, lake, and muskeg. The small rough hills are all cut off at the same height, and the land slides so gently into the bay that ships may ground far out from the shore, except at the mouth of the Churchill River.

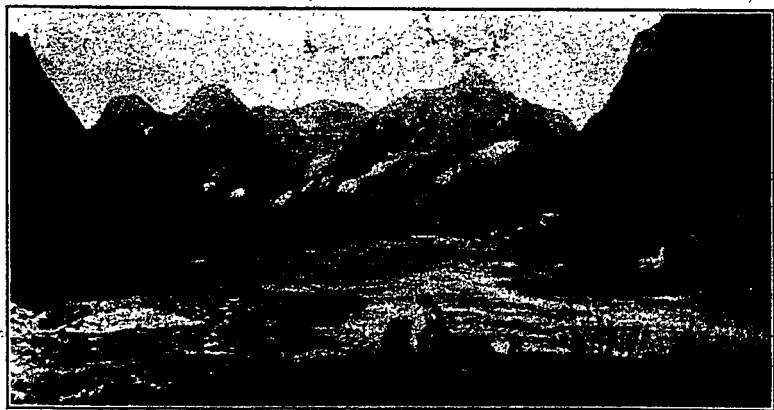
From out the numerous valleys of the Rockies dance merry mountain streams, which combine their forces to make great rivers. Two of these bear the same name, Saskatchewan, the Cree word for "rapid river." For hundreds of miles, they twist about in the deep channels which they have worn on the soft face of the plain, until at last they meet near the city of Prince Albert. Then the united waters, forming one of the mightiest rivers of the continent, flow on for another three hundred miles before they empty through Cedar Lake into the northern end of Lake Winnipeg.



Relief map of Western Canada.

3

Near the bend where the South Saskatchewan turns north to join its sister, another stream arises. This is the Qu'Appelle. The superstitious Indians believed that a spirit dwelt there, and they insisted that they often heard it cry with something like a human voice. So they named it "The River that Calls," and the French translated it, "Qu'Appelle." Running eastward, it falls into the Assiniboine, which comes down from the north, and the Assiniboine then continues through the



The junction of the Bow and the Spray Rivers, Alberta. From a painting by E. Roper, 1887

southern part of Manitoba till it meets the Red River flowing from the south. Forty-five miles north of the forks, the Red empties into the southern end of Lake Winnipeg.

Fifty miles north-east of this point is the mouth of the Winnipeg River, which drains the Lake of the Woods on the borders of Ontario. Lake Winnipeg also receives the overflow from the smaller Lakes Manitoba and Winnipegosis to the west. It is thus the great basin which gathers almost all the waters of the southern half of the Canadian North-West, and it discharges them by the Nelson River into Hudson Bay.

A hundred miles north of the Nelson's mouth, another great river pours into the bay. This is the Churchill, which rises in the north-west of the province of Saskatchewan, nine hundred miles away. It runs a rather tumultuous race to the sea, for, though it frequently spreads out into little sleeping lakes, it boils in many a rapid. Roughly speaking, its course lies parallel to that of the Saskatchewan and the Nelson, and, therefore, it may be considered a smaller sister of the greater system.

On the slopes of the Rocky Mountains, north-west of the many streams which in the end find their way down to Hudson Bay, appear other rivers which seek a different goal. First, there is the Athabaska, which empties into Lake Athabaska on the northern edge of the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan. Then there is the Peace River, which flows north-east in the direction of Lake Athabaska, and, when it approaches within a few miles, it takes a northerly sweep to meet the outflow from that lake. The united waters are called the Slave River, which passes through Great Slave Lake and emerges as the Mackenzie River, which rolls on majestically to the Arctic Ocean.

The "Barren Grounds" lie north-east of a line joining the mouths of the Mackenzie and the Churchill Rivers, and cover the great territory between the Arctic Ocean and Hudson Bay. There the winters are so long and the summers so short that the ground is always frozen to an unknown depth. When the sun comes north every year, it melts only a few inches, or at most a foot or so, of the surface. Therefore, few plants can live in this country, and those that do survive grow but little. The chief vegetation is composed of mosses and lichens. There are a few dwarfed shrubs, such as the cloudberry, the crowberry, and the cowberry, but there are no trees whatever. Apart from herds of caribou and musk-ox, there is relatively little animal life in all the "Barren Grounds."



One of the largest continuous forests in the world lies to the south of these lands. It is like a huge belt across the continent, six hundred miles wide and three thousand long, for it stretches from the lower reaches of the Mackenzie right away to Labrador. It is composed mostly of pine, spruce, fir, balsam, tamarack, poplar, and birch. In the north, the trees are scattered and stunted. In the middle, they are large, and, though there are many prairie openings, the forest is generally thick. Fur-bearing animals are here found in abundance. To the south-west, this wooded belt joins the forest that clothes the Rocky Mountains. To the south-east, it crosses the Saskatchewan, dips down into the province of Manitoba, up again to avoid Lake Manitoba, and then turns down to strike the international boundary at the west end of the Lake of the Woods. In the middle, it fades out along the line of the North Saskatchewan.

South of this curtain of forest lies the open prairie, an immense tract of grass lands occupying the heart of the continent. The part projecting into Canada is twice as large as Great Britain. It is shaped like a triangle leaning to the west, its blunt top lying just north of Edmonton. Like deep wrinkles on the bare face of the plain are the winding river valleys, which are often marked by lines of poplar and willow. Another prominent feature of the prairie is the number of shallow lakes or sloughs, where reeds and wild fowl abound. These bodies of water have no outlet, and, therefore, they are strongly alkaline. They are largest in the spring. As the summer advances, they shrink in size, depositing alkali like hoar frost upon the bare ground around their margins. Some sloughs entirely disappear before the autumn, having been all drawn up by the thirsty sun or licked up by the hot winds of summer. In the south-west, the country is so dry that many a valley has lost its river and become what is known as a "coulee." There the prairie is so parched that the cactus



Prairie flowers. From a painting by E. Roper, 1887.

commonly takes the place of softer vegetation. But over the rest of the country, the wild grass forms a carpet that is decorated with a profusion of wild flowers throughout the spring and summer.

For countless ages bison and deer grazed over these pastures, keeping a wary eye open for their enemies, the wolves. But those days are gone for ever. A remnant of the herds may be seen to-day in the national parks; but out on the open prairie, the only traces which they have left are little hollows where the buffalo once wallowed and winding creases worn by the tramp of their heavy feet as they filed along. With the monarch of the plains and the gentler deer, the packs of wolves have disappeared, and now all that are left are the lonely coyotes whose calls, like children crying in the night, come as an echo of the dead past.

Other great changes have come over this land. The railways have woven a network of steel threads across the prairie; the grass is being ploughed under to let the rich soil grow crops of golden grain; and the whole vast region is dotted with villages, towns, and cities. But this is really the end of the story, and we must begin at the beginning.

## CHAPTER II

### *The First Inhabitants.*

Although the red men have vanished from many of their earlier haunts, their ghosts are everywhere. Nothing could be more natural, for the Indians were the only inhabitants of the land for countless generations. The rivers and the lakes were their familiar friends, and they named them. Only some of these names have we replaced; the others we have taken over with the country. Having lived here from time out of mind, the Indians found the most convenient routes for travel by land and water, and hit upon favoured camping sites. When white men came for their furs, they, of course, followed trails worn by Indian feet and frequented the spots where the natives commonly gathered. Thus the Indians really fixed the traders' paths and the traders' posts, which in time grew into roads and centres of settlement.

Where these Indians came from is a question about which many books have been written. Some have tried to prove that they are the descendants of the "Lost Ten Tribes of Israel," and others that they are the outgrowth of a Welsh colony planted three hundred years before Columbus sailed on his famous voyage, but this is all nonsense. Now, it is believed that they are distant cousins of the Chinese and Japanese, who came across the north of the Pacific Ocean, where Asia and North America stretch out their hands as if to meet.

When they came, we do not know. It must have been many, many hundred years ago. Nor do we know how many there were between the Rocky Mountains and Hudson Bay at the time when white men arrived. A very rough guess places the number at about one hundred thousand.

The Indians speak a babel of tongues, but scholars, after many years of study, have discovered that these languages bear a certain resemblance to one another. Those tribes who speak similar languages, the scholars have grouped together as probably having the same origin. In the whole of North America, they have found over fifty such language families or stocks. Only three of them appeared in any number in the Canadian North-West, the Athapaskan, the Algonquian, and the Siouan.

The Athapaskan peoples, who were quite peaceful, inhabited the North. Of these the best known tribes were the Beaver Indians of the Peace River district, and the Chipewyans, who lived chiefly to the south of Lake Athabaska.



A Blackfoot chief. From a painting by E. Roper.

The Algonquians lay like a wide layer to the south of the Athapaskans, all the way from Hudson Bay to the Rocky Mountains. They were divided into two very distinct groups, the Blackfoot confederacy and the Crees. The former included the Blackfeet, the Bloods, the Piegiens, and the Gros Ventres. They possessed the western plains and the foothills,

were great warriors, and were organized in a kind of league, or confederacy. The other group, the Crees, had no such organization and were more peacefully inclined. Because the various tribes of the Crees occupied different kinds of country and, therefore, lived different kinds of lives, they had little in common beyond their name and the similarity of their speech.



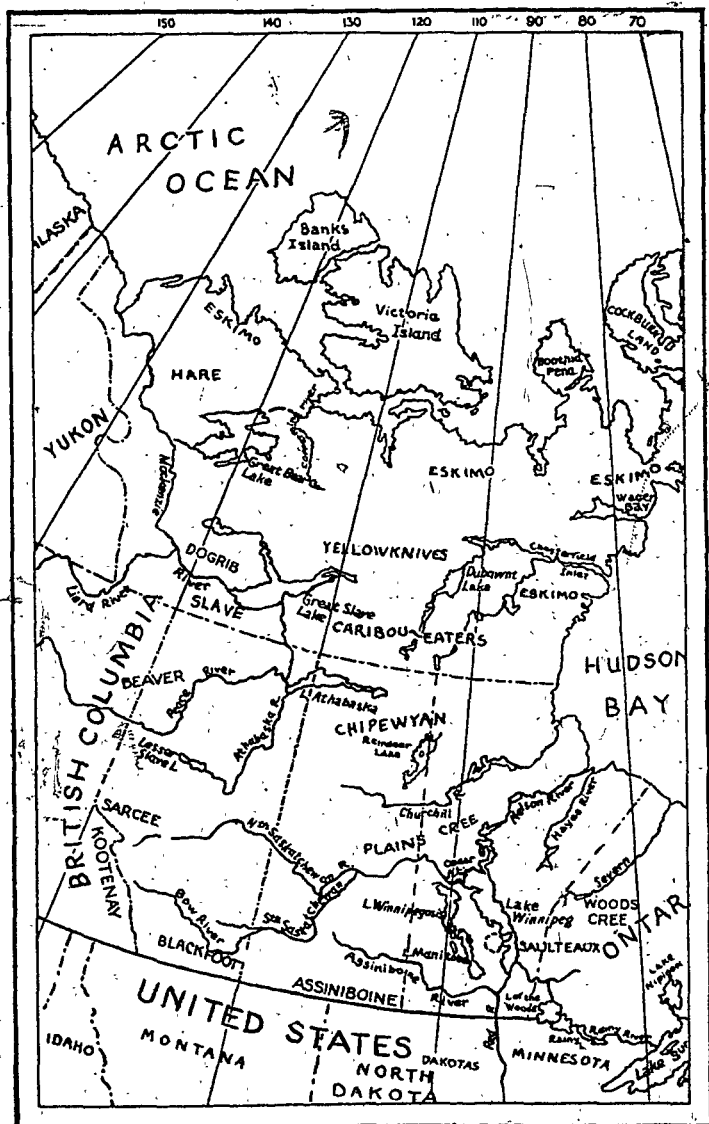
A Cree Indian.

There were the Wood Crees, who stretched along the wooded country of the North Saskatchewan and down some distance along the united river, the Plain Crees, who lived in the prairie to the south, and the Crees of the Muskegs, who inhabited the lower-lying lands around Lake Winnipeg and down to Hudson Bay. The last were also known as Swampies or Muskegons.

Of the Siouans, there were the Stonies, or Assiniboinis, who lived along the river to which they have given their name, and the Dakotas to the south of them. These two tribes were more ready to fight

than were the Crees, but they did not possess the bloody reputation of the Blackfoot confederacy.

Some have held the absurd notion that the Indian spent most of his time on the war-path or in feasting. If this were true, he would have had to be a cannibal, which he was not. Roughly speaking, he had reached about the same state of development as had the ancestors of the English when they migrated from the forests of Germany. In warmer climates, he had made a beginning at agriculture, but in the North-West he lived upon fish and game, principally the latter. His wars were much like many white men's wars—an effort to seize or hold territory,



The Indians of the West.

because it provided him with the means of subsistence. He was essentially a hunter and only incidentally a warrior when his hunting fields were at stake.

For weapons, he had bows and arrows, spears, knives, and tomahawks. The bow-string was the sinew of some wild animal. The knives and the heads of the arrows and spears were of stone or bone. The tomahawk was a stout cudgel with a stone head, which was either tied on or passed through a hole bored in the wood. After a war, some of these were ceremoniously buried in the ground as a sign that now there was peace. This is the origin of our phrase "to bury the hatchet," because the tomahawk looked like a very rough kind of hatchet.



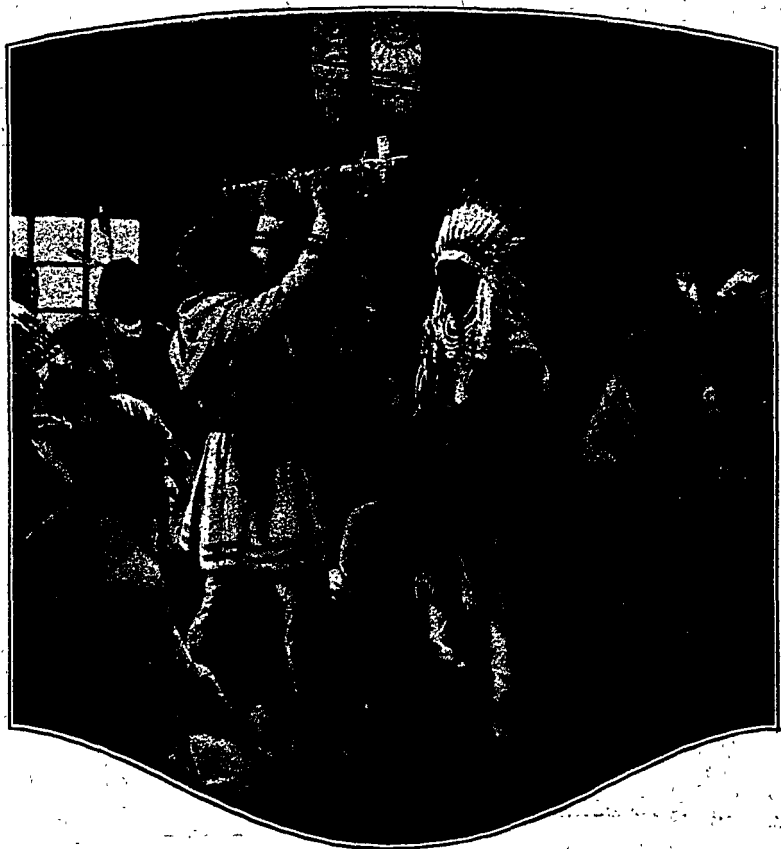
An Indian peepee.

Another phrase, "smoking the pipe of peace," also comes from an old custom followed by the Indians when making peace, and on other solemn occasions. A calumet, a tobacco pipe two or three feet long and highly decorated, was lighted and passed from lip to lip, each member of the company in turn taking a whiff. When white men came to this continent, they were often allowed to share in the ceremony of the pipe as a sign that they and the red men were true friends.

The Indians who practised agriculture often dwelt in large towns, but those who existed by hunting could not live in large



communities. They would not have had enough to eat. Therefore, the Indians of the North-West, who lived by hunting, were all in small scattered villages, and these villages



—Courtesy of the Hudson's Bay Company.  
The ceremony of the pipe.

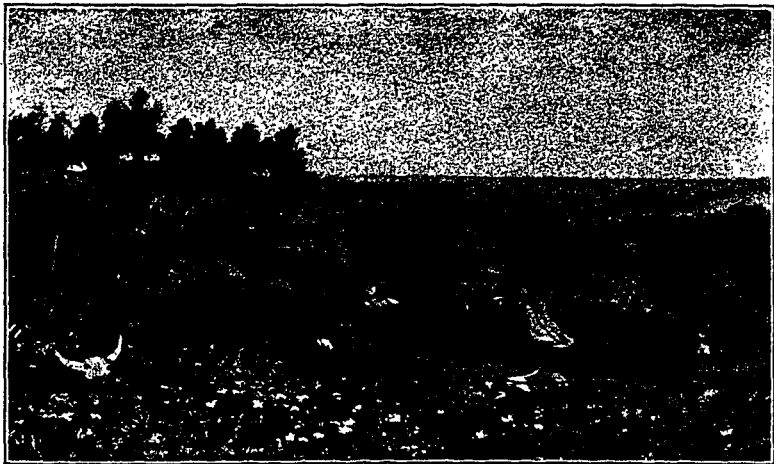
could not remain long in one place. When game grew scarce, the natives had to move on, or they would have starved. For this reason, their only houses were such as they could carry.

The wigwams of the wood Indians were made of flexible saplings stuck in the ground in a circle, pulled together and tied at the top, and covered with birch-bark strips commonly held at the bottom by a rim of cedar. The Indians of the plains had tepees of dressed leather stretched on poles. These were made by tying two poles together about three feet from their thin ends which were placed at the top, their thick ends spread apart on the ground. Then about fifteen other poles were rested against this crotch to make a cone. Over all was pulled a sheet of a dozen or so hides sewn together, and the sides were laced where they met. It was quite a good-sized structure about twenty feet in diameter. At the top was a hole to let the smoke escape from the fire, which was built in the centre within a ring of stones. These tents of skin or bark were easy to pitch or strike and to pack overland or tuck in a canoe.

Because they were hunters, the Indians were great travellers. When they could find the materials to make them, they used birch-bark canoes. These they built and managed with great skill. On the bald prairie, where there were only a few willow or poplar bushes, all that they could do was to make a rather poor frame and cover it with skins. This was the bull-boat, so called after the "buffalo bulls" whose hides took the place of bark. It was quite inferior to the birch-bark canoe. By the time the white men reached them, however, the plain Indians had another and better means of transportation—horses—of which we shall speak later.

With this exception, the only domestic animals which the Indians had were dogs. As these had considerable wolf blood in them, they were not very tame. But they were good beasts of burden and could carry sixty or seventy pounds over a distance of twenty or thirty miles a day. They could haul more on a travois and still more on a sledge, the only land vehicles of the natives.

The travois, which was employed in the summer months, was made of two poles fastened together like a very thin V. The point was attached to the back of the animal, while the spread ends trailed on the ground, kept apart by cross bars to which the load was tied. This seems a clumsy affair, but it was the best that the Indians could make. They knew nothing of the remarkable invention of the wheel until they saw white men using it. The sledge was the grandfather of our toboggan.



Indians travelling. From a painting by E. Roper, 1887.

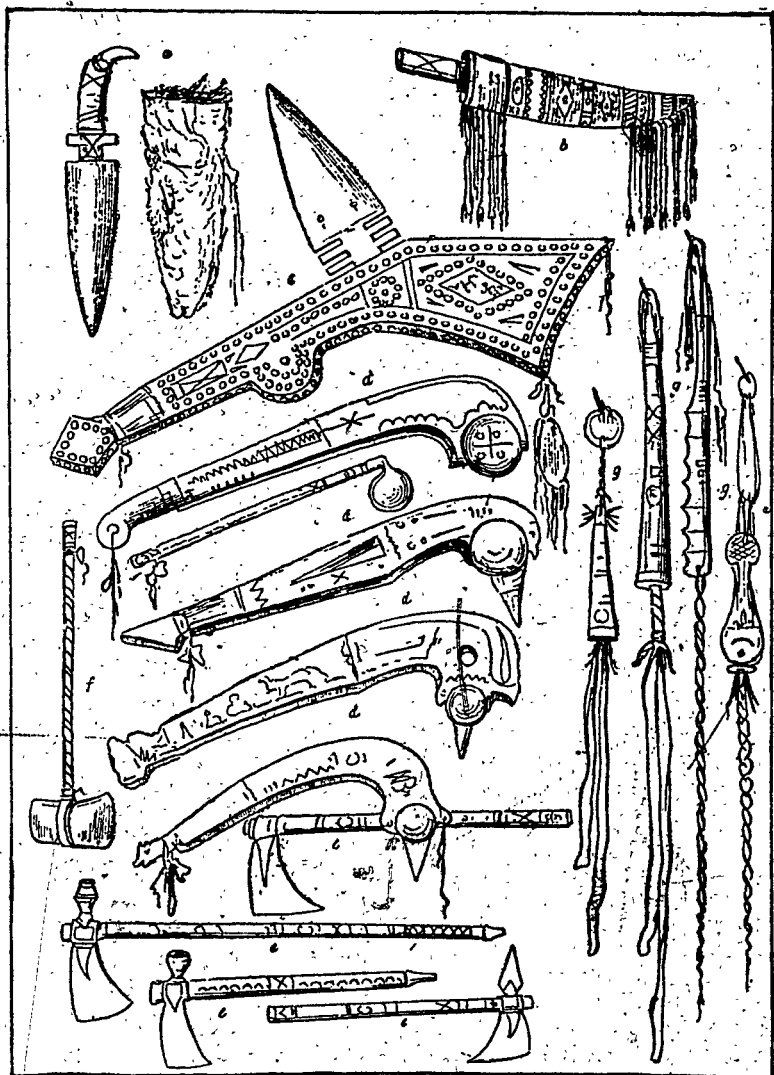
It was made of a thin strip of wood about a foot and a half wide and turned up in front. The front and sides were covered with buffalo hide, and a straight board stood up at the back. Over the snow, the Indian journeyed on snow-shoes, which were like wings to his feet, for they carried him much faster and farther than he could travel on foot over the hard ground.

The Indians had no written language, but they had little need for it, and that need they satisfied by the device of simple pictures and signs. If they wished to tell others where they went on breaking camp, they put sticks in the ground leaning

in the direction that they intended to follow. If they wanted to leave news of a good hunt, they made rough sketches on a piece of bark showing the number and kind of animals that they had killed, and this they put upon a twig. Similarly, they indicated time by drawing the particular phase of the moon, and they did it so accurately that one who was skilled could tell the very day that was meant.

For clothing, the Indian had moccasins, leather leggings of one piece sewn up on the outside, a leather loin cloth one foot wide and five feet long, and a shirt also made of leather. All this was held together by a belt which kept the shirt close to his body, and over which the ends of the loin cloth hung. Over all he commonly wore a buffalo skin which was often highly ornamented, and, of course, he had a fur cap and leather mittens. The leather garments were usually decorated with paint, porcupine quills, fringes, and tassels. The dress of the women was similar to that of the men folk, though not exactly the same. Both men and women practised tattooing, a custom which is common in primitive civilizations and which is also found among the lower classes of white society. The men plucked or shaved all their hair except one lock on the top which they tended with great care. As this was the chief pride of the man who wore it on his head, it was the chief pride of his enemy when he could wear it at his belt. Scalping, of course, was very common, but this, like tattooing, has been found among many other primitive peoples. When, on the war-path, the Indians painted themselves with wild designs in white, green, blue, and red to strike fear into the hearts of their enemies.

The Indians of the North-West ate little else than meat, usually buffalo, moose, or deer. Occasionally they ate it raw, but they preferred it roasted or boiled. Roasting was a simple matter—on a spit stuck in the ground and leaning towards the fire—but boiling called for more ingenuity. The kettles could not be put on the fire, for they were commonly made



From Catlin's "North American Indians."

# Indian weapons.

a and b, scalping knives; c, war-club of civilized Indian; d, war-clubs of primitive Indians; e, tomahawks; f, hatchet; g, whips.

of bark. The problem was solved by heating stones in the fire and dropping them into the pot.

They knew nothing of how to preserve meat with salt, but they cured the lean parts by drying them in smoke, and they melted down the fat. Their famous staple article of food was pemmican. This was generally manufactured from buffalo meat. The lean flesh was dried until quite hard, when it was pounded into fine pieces. Then it was placed in leather bags, sometimes with a few wild berries for additional flavour, and melted fat was poured in until the bag was full. The meat and the fat were thus completely mixed, and the soggy mess was left to cool and harden right in the bag. If kept dry, pemmican would last for years without spoiling.

The Indians had no meal hours, but ate at all times—if they had food. One wonders why they should ever be without it, but they often were in that plight because they were very improvident children. Therefore, they let out their belts when game was plentiful and tightened them when there was none.

The lot of the women in this society was not, on the whole, a hard one. Their lives were no harder than those of the men. The men did all the hunting and fighting, while the women had charge of domestic matters, a division of labour very similar to that of the majority of our society. True, the husband did not wander off to kill man or beast every day, while his wife did have to be on duty constantly. She gathered the fuel, a few twigs, and prepared the food, but that was very simple. Indeed, her tasks were very light, except when the village struck or pitched camp, and then she had to be house-mover and builder. Even this was no heavy job when the house and all its furniture could be done up in half a dozen rolls of bark or skin. The man of the house was lord of the family, but within the domestic circle his wife usually managed to be mistress. Like him, she was able to spend most of the time in idleness. Now and then an Indian had more than one wife,



From Catlin's "North American Indians."  
Papoose cradles.

a. A Sioux cradle. b. A mourning cradle — if the infant dies during the time that is allotted to it to be carried in this cradle, it is buried, and the disconsolate mother fills the cradle with black quills and feathers and carries it around with her wherever she goes for a year or more. c. Toys suspended before a child's face in a cradle, rolled up in which is a little ball of sacred medicine supposed to bring the child good luck and long life. d. Sioux women carrying their children on their backs.

but this was not the rule. In time of famine, which is always a good test of character, the women, along with the old folk and the children, were often better supplied with food than the men.

Until they were old enough to run around, babies, or papooses, were carried on their mothers' backs. For the first half year they were fastened by bandages to a small board. Afterwards, they were secured merely by a blanket as in the illustration. Parents were very fond of their children and rarely laid violent hands upon them. One famous scholar who lived among the Indians about a century ago wrote: "In the hot summer evenings the children of the Chippeway Algonquins, along the shores of the upper lakes and in the northern latitudes, frequently assemble before their parents' lodges and amuse themselves by chants of various kinds, with shouts and wild dancing." One of the songs which he overheard was a fire-fly song, which he translated as follows:

"Flitting white-fire-insect!

Waving white-fire-bug

Give me light before I go to bed!

Come, little dancing white-fire-bug!

Come little flitting white-fire-beast!

Light me with your bright white-flame-instrument—

Your little candle."

Of course, the Indians were dirty, but so were our ancestors. All in all, the social life of the North American Indians was as good as could be expected. If it had been otherwise, they could not have got on together. The villages of the same tribe did not war against one another, and within the villages and the tribes they had little government or law such as we know them, simply because they did not need them. They had chiefs, but what was a chief? Just a man whom the rest recognized as having more courage, more skill, and more wisdom than themselves. Only in so far as they trusted his leadership did he



have any authority. They lived by the rules of custom, and these were preserved by the medicine men, a name that is apt to be misleading unless one remembers that "medicine" meant "magic." These medicine men were steeped in the lore of the woods and prairies. In a rough way they knew what was good for their people, and they made them follow it by playing upon their superstition.

The coming of the white man wrought great changes in the red man's mode of living. First of all in time and importance was the introduction of firearms, which made him a more effective hunter and fighter. The tribes who first received these magic weapons could do what they liked with their enemies up country, and they often did it. Thus handicapped, the more distant tribes became eager to reach the white trader, and they would travel any distance to get their hearts' desire—guns and vengeance on their foes. Thus, the arrival of the European kindled the flames of native war. But fighting diverted the Indians from hunting, and, therefore, the white man's great concern was now to quench the flames that he had unwittingly fed. Sometimes he was a very good peacemaker, but often he was helpless.

Firewater was another dread gift, but this the white man generally kept under control. Otherwise the natives would have got out of hand, and he would have received fewer furs. Beads and other trinkets had an innocent effect, for they ministered only to the savage passion for display. More important were blankets and articles of clothing, or materials for making them, which soon came into common demand among the natives. This vogue the trader encouraged, because such substitutes for skin clothing enabled the Indians to hand over more furs. Still more important were hatchets, knives, and kettles, which made life much easier for the hunters. Indeed, the greater the variety and the quantity of merchandise which the trader could bring the Indians to want, the better was it for his trade.

The general result was that before long most natives could not live without traffic of some kind with these newcomers from across the sea.

One other great boon some of the Indians owed to Europeans, but these were neither French nor English. They were the Spaniards who brought horses to Mexico. The Indians who lived in the woods had little use for horses, but the Indians who dwelt in the plains wanted them very badly. Therefore, by inter-tribal trade and by stealing, horses passed up the central plateau of the continent to the Indians of the Canadian prairie and transformed their whole manner of life. On becoming mounted, they leaped from a backward state to an advanced state, both as hunters and as fighters. Their horses made them really lords of the plains, for they were the ships of the great land sea.

Although the fur trader wished to preserve Indian society as the ever-flowing fountain of furs, the mere contact with white civilization tended to weaken it and break it up. This change was brought about in many ways. For one thing, the Indian caught the white man's diseases. Although he lived an outdoor life, he suffered much more than the white men. This was because he did not have the power of resistance which white people have developed by living more or less in contact with these diseases for generations. Tuberculosis is only one of the many white man's diseases that have eaten through the whole of red society, weakening the Indians in number and in physique.

Further, many white men on coming to the country chose Indian brides, and they had dusky children. This mixing of the races was sometimes good, but at other times it was unfortunate, for the half-breeds often combined the worst qualities of "red skin" and "pale face." Another mistake which the white man made was to weaken the power of the medicine man over his fellows without putting something

better in its place. Sometimes he meant to do it; sometimes he did not, but he did it all the same. Only recently have we come to realize that the medicine man was the guardian of Indian customs and morals, and now we see that the white man, by destroying his influence, removed the linchpin of Indian society.

But we are anticipating the story. Let us go back to the time when the white man first set foot in this country.

## CHAPTER III

### *An Explorer who discovered his own Grave.*

Christopher Columbus sailed to find Asia and died without knowing that he had found America. For a long time, even after this was found to be a separate continent, no one had the faintest idea of its size. Men believed that they could sail west all the way to China. They imagined that the part of the world where the Canadian North-West lies was covered with water. When ships tried to find their way past America, however, they came to a great deal of land. This did not discourage them. Everybody believed that this was only a number of islands, and that with a little patience they would find a water passage through them.

About three hundred and fifty years ago ships from various European countries were prowling about the entrance to Hudson Bay. Some got farther than others, but who they all were and exactly where they went, we are not sure. In 1602, an Englishman, George Waymouth, seems to have sailed two hundred leagues up Hudson Strait, which no one before had done. This was encouraging news, and it inspired another English explorer, Henry Hudson, with the hope of discovering what others had sought in vain.

Hudson had no difficulty in finding support for his expensive adventure. All the merchants of Europe who traded in the goods of Asia were eager to find a shorter and cheaper route to the East than by going around Africa or through the Mediterranean. They were glad to pay the expenses of any mariner who would find such a route, for it would increase their business and their profits. Now, it happened that Hudson

was in Holland when he made his decision to follow Waymouth, and he turned to the Dutch East India Company to help him.

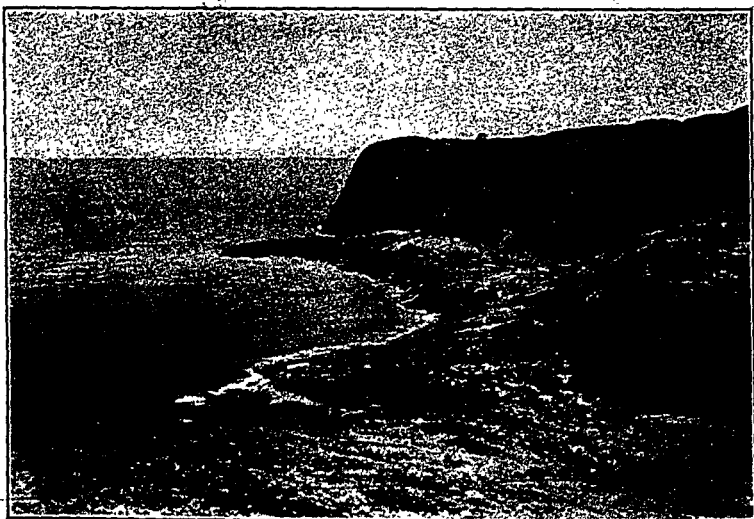
The merchants of this company at once fitted out a small vessel, and in it Hudson sailed away in April, 1609. Soon he was up in the Arctic regions. His crew, however, did not like a voyage in the cold waters on the top of the world, and they compelled him to turn south-west. Pursuing this course, he at last came to America and cruised along the coast until he found what seemed to be a gateway to a water passage through the land. Turning into this opening, he went north for one hundred and fifty miles, and then he abandoned hope of finding China by that route. This was the discovery of the Hudson River which empties into the sea at New York.

On his way back to Holland, Hudson put in at an English port, where the government seized his vessel and crew to prevent him from carrying on his explorations for the benefit of foreigners. Three English merchants who were interested in foreign trade now took him up and fitted out another ship for him. This was the *Discovery*, a small craft of fifty-five tons carrying a crew of twenty-three.

In the spring of 1610, Hudson embarked upon his last and most famous voyage. The story of it we have from the daily journal which he kept and from the account written afterwards by Abacuk Prickett, one of the crew who survived. They first landed at Iceland, where they saw "Mount Hecla which cast out much fire," and where they shot "so much fowle as feasted all our company." Then west they sailed, rounding the southern point of Greenland and reaching the mouth of what is now known as Hudson Strait in the latter part of June.

The passage through Hudson Strait is frequently very dangerous. For several months of the year the strait is

frozen over, and when it opens in the spring it is seldom free of icebergs, some of them like mountains. If these icebergs would only stay still, ships could easily sail around and between them without much danger, but they do not. The current set up by the tide rushing in and out of the bay carries them hither and thither, and whenever the wind is high it blows them about with considerable speed. Often they crash to-



A rocky coast on Hudson Strait.

gether with a great grinding noise. Then woe betide any vessel that is caught between them! There will be nothing left of it but matchwood. Hudson's crew had no relish for such a horrible death, and they were terrified. They tried to force him to turn back to safety, but he had that strong determination and stout courage which carry men to great things. All through July their hearts were in their mouths, as they wormed their way through the masses of ice that might at any time close in upon them. Early in August, they began to breathe

more freely as they passed out into the open waters of the bay.

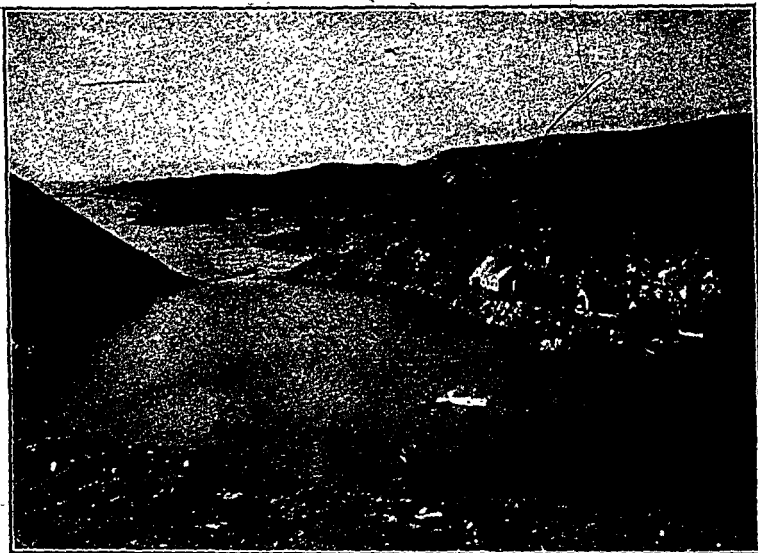
They did not know that they were in a great land-locked sea. They thought that they were on the open ocean over which they might sail to China. They knew, however, that China's climate was warm, and that they were in a cold part of the world. Therefore, they headed south, and for several weeks they wandered in and out among the islands of the east coast of Hudson Bay until they reached the foot of James Bay.

The summer was now gone, and they felt the necessity of escaping from these northern shores before the biting blasts of winter could catch and hold them there. Now, to their dismay, they found that land to the west as well as land to the south blocked their further passage. They were trapped. They could not go on, and they could not go back, for the terrible strait through which they had come would be ice-bound until late in the following spring. There was nothing for it but to spend the winter where never a white man had wintered before.

On November 1st, they pulled their ship aground in Rupert Bay, which lies in the south-east corner of James Bay. In ten days everything was frozen up. Fortunately the forest came to the water's edge, and they could cut all the fuel that they needed to keep them warm. Their stock of provisions had run dangerously low, but, during the first part of the winter, they did not need to draw upon it much, for they found plenty of fresh food, both fish and game. They killed and ate about a hundred dozen ptarmigan, a large bird of the grouse family which lives in northern climates. After a while, both fish and game disappeared, and all that they could gather to satisfy the pangs of hunger were frogs and moss.

Towards spring a very interesting thing happened. The first Indian whom they had seen stepped out of the forest. Hudson treated the visitor well, giving him a knife, a looking-

glass, and some buttons. With these treasures, the red man departed. The next day he returned, dragging after him a toboggan bearing the skins of two deer and two beaver. The Indian wanted to trade with the Englishmen, but he did not know their language, nor did they know his tongue. Therefore, he proceeded to explain his intentions by signs.



A scene of to-day on Hudson Strait.

Laying down the two beaver skins, he placed the knife on one and the looking-glass and the buttons on the other. Then he bundled up the trinkets, leaving the beaver skins on the ground, thus indicating that he considered this a fair exchange. He still had the deer skins, and wanted to trade them also. He offered one of them for a hatchet which Hudson had shown him, but Hudson demanded both skins for the hatchet, and he got them. "After many signs of people to the north and to the south, and that after so many sleepes he would come again, he



went his way, but never came more," wrote Prickett, after describing the incident.

The expedition had set out with never a thought of trade in this quarter of the world, and here it was thrust upon them. This unexpected bargaining for two beaver and two deer skins was the beginning of the great fur trade which was to be the chief interest of the Canadian North-West for a much longer time than it has been a settled country.

When spring unlocked their vessel and opened the sea, there was no thought for trade or exploration. They had almost no food, and their one concern was to get back home before they all starved. Just before sailing, Hudson gathered his men together and divided up all the bread that was left—only one pound apiece. This quickly disappeared, and so did five cheeses and thirty cakes of ship's biscuit, which were later discovered. Plainly they could not all survive.

Under the greatest trials men may do wonders if they support one another loyally, but there was little loyalty here. Ever since they had faced the perils of the strait, there had been evil murmurings and dark whisperings among the crew. Two in particular had been putting their wicked heads together. One was Henry Greene, a young lad whom Hudson had rescued from the London streets and had made his trusted servant. The other was Robert Juet, who had sailed as mate. These two men should have clung to Hudson through thick and thin, the one because he owed everything to him, the other because he was next to him in authority. But Greene was an ungrateful wretch and Juet an evil old sailor, and they stirred the others up against their master. The latter had seen something of their game and had tried to stop it by deposing Juet and promoting another to be mate in his stead. This filled Juet with a desire for revenge. Their fiendish plan was to seize their master and cut him adrift in the ship's boat, along with all the sick members of the crew who were eating but

could not work. By sacrificing these, the rest thought that they might save their own lives. Therefore, they joined in the crime. On June 20th, they struck.

Seizing Hudson as he came out of his cabin, they bound his arms behind him. He asked them what they meant. They



The last hours of Henry Hudson. From the painting by Collier.

told him he should know when he was in the shallop, or ship's boat. Meanwhile, John King, the carpenter of the ship's crew and a most loyal man, grasped a sword and fought the mutineers until his master called to him that he was bound. "Then was the shallop haled up to the ship side," says Prickett, "and the poore, sicke, and lame men were called upon to get them out of their cabbins into the shallop . . . . . Now

was the carpenter at libertie, who asked them if they would bee hanged when they came home; and as for himsele, hee said, hee would not stay in the ship unlesse they would force him; they bade him goe then, for they would not stay him. I will (said he) so I may have my cheste with mee, and all that is in it; they said, he should, and presently they put it into the shallop." Thus were Hudson, his son, the carpenter, and six sick men cut adrift in an open boat in the middle of the bay.

No one ever saw or heard of them again. Twenty years afterwards, Captain James visited Danby Island, which lies just east of Charlton Island in James Bay, and there he found some stakes, apparently made with a hatchet, driven into the ground. This is the only possible clue to the fate of Henry Hudson. He has no grave stone, but his name will never die, for it is on every map of the world, marking the strait through which he was the first to pass and the great bay over whose waters he was the first to sail.

The mutineers paid dearly for their crime. They hoped to shoot some game at the western entrance to the strait, where they had seen some wild fowl in the previous August, but they could find none. Seeing some Eskimos, four of the crew, including Greene, landed to ask them for food and were promptly murdered. The remainder hoisted sail and made for home. They were barely enough to work the ship, and their terrible suffering suggests the nightmare of the ancient mariner of Coleridge's poem. After they had cleared the strait, Juet, like Greene before him, came to a fitting end. He died of starvation. With a crew that had scarcely strength to stand, the ship staggered home. The survivors were thrown into prison for their murderous mutiny, but somehow they managed to escape the gallows, a punishment which they richly deserved.

The curse which blighted this famous voyage did not discourage the merchants at home. The news of a great tide surging through the strait convinced them that this was a channel to the South Sea, as it was then called, which washed the shores of China. In 1612, they dispatched another and larger expedition. Their only thought of trade was still with the Orient. They were so confident that they procured for the commander of the expedition a letter from King James I introducing him to the emperor of China or Japan, or to the sovereign of any other eastern land that he might touch in his voyage.

This is only one of the many expeditions which now ran up against the western shores of Hudson Bay in a vain effort to sail through the continent and away to Asia. We may smile at these men, and we may pity them for trying to reach China through Hudson Bay, but they did something after all. Many great discoveries have been made by men looking for something else, and these mariners, though they did not find China, completed what Henry Hudson had begun, the discovery of Hudson Bay.



## CHAPTER IV

### *How two Frenchmen founded a great English Company.*

For a long, long time, the greatest business of this continent was the fur trade. This was because furs were very cheap in America and very expensive in Europe. In the Old World, kings and princes and great noblemen wore them, and rich people who wished to appear great followed their example. Furs were thus the height of fashion, and people were willing to pay almost any price for them. In America they were easy to get. The land was full of fur-bearing animals; and the Indians, who lived on their flesh and dressed in their skins, were skilful in catching them.

The Indians, moreover, were glad to gather furs and sell them to the white man, because they wanted what the white man had to give. Beads and looking-glasses and trinkets of different kinds caught the native fancy for the same reason that the great people in Europe loved furs—because they thought that they looked more handsome in them. The white man had also useful things to offer. Red men would give a lot of furs for hatchets and knives and kettles of copper and iron, for they had nothing like that. But the white man had two other things which the Indian desired above all else because they had magic in them—firearms and firewater.

In the beginning, the French were ahead of the English in this trade. One reason was geographical. In mothering her creatures according to their need, Nature provides those in colder climates with warmer winter coats than those in more temperate regions. Therefore, the farther north the better the furs. Now, New France lay to the north of New England

and was on that account a land of better furs. In addition to this advantage, the French had more furs within their reach. The only way at that time to travel any distance in America was by water, and the great system of lakes and rivers draining into the St. Lawrence beckoned the French into the heart of the continent, where the supply seemed unlimited. The English were in the very opposite situation, for the Allegheny Mountains cooped them up on the narrow Atlantic seaboard.

Another reason why the English were behind is the way New England was founded. The Pilgrim Fathers were



Fur traders setting out from Montreal.

escaping from persecution in their old home, and what they wanted was to make a new home where they could be free. They did not desire wealth. New France, on the other hand, was to be built up out of the profits of the fur trade. The French were looking for wealth.

But why did not the English at once begin to trade on the shores of the bay after Hudson had pointed the way, by his little bargain? The answer to this lies in England. Englishmen might have begun the fur trade long before they did, had it not been for troubles which kept them busy at home. For many years England was torn by civil war and then oppressed by military rule. Not until the Restoration of Charles II in

1660 were Englishmen, at peace with themselves. Once more they could look abroad and think of material things, and this is exactly what they did. Now was the time ripe for the founding of the Hudson's Bay Company, and it sprang into being almost immediately.

Because the French had been ahead, it was very natural that two of them should found the English company. These were two of the most daring *coureurs de bois* of New France, Pierre Esprit Radisson and his brother-in-law, Médard Chouart. The latter had a little estate named Groseilliers, the French word for gooseberry-bushes, and liked to call himself Sieur (Lord) des Groseilliers, by which name he is best known. Both were born in France, but migrated to Canada as youths and plunged immediately into a life of wild adventure. More than once, Radisson was a prisoner of the Iroquois and would have been tortured to death but for thrilling escapes. These two young men are famous as the first explorers of the whole of Lake Superior and the surrounding country. They were also the first white men to reach the upper waters of the Mississippi, and it is even possible that they journeyed overland to James Bay.

In all probability they would have spent all their lives in the service of New France and never have brought the English to the shores of the bay, had it not been for an unpleasant incident in 1663. They returned from the Upper Lakes with a rich cargo of furs, but were forced to pay a very heavy fine, because they had gone off to trade without procuring a license for that purpose from the governor. They felt that they were robbed, and Groseilliers went over to France to appeal against the sentence. It was all in vain. Therefore, when he returned to Canada, the two brothers-in-law decided to seek their fortunes elsewhere.

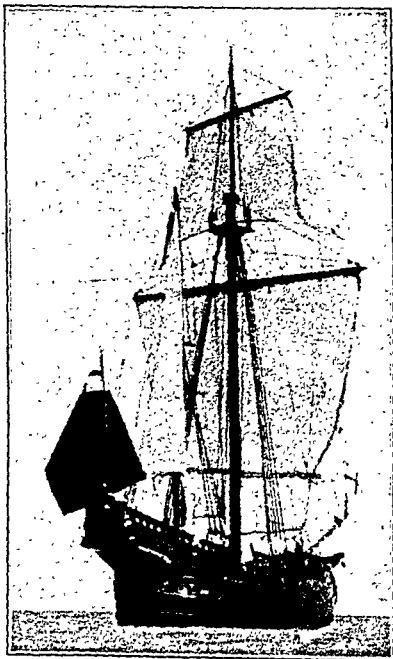
During their many wanderings, they had noticed what we have already observed, that the best furs were in the north.

They now determined to go farther north still and seek them by way of Hudson Bay which, because of the many expeditions which had followed that of Henry Hudson, was already well known.

Going down to Port Royal in Acadia, they fell in with a Boston sea-captain and trader, Zachary Gillam. They told him all manner of tales of how they could all become very wealthy, if only they could get to the great inland sea of the north. Gillam was sorely tempted, and finally agreed to go to the bay and to take them with him. Late in the summer of 1664, they sailed in his vessel the *Nonsuch*. This was the first expedition bound for the bay to trade instead of to explore, but it failed to reach its goal. As they came near Hudson Strait, great storms blew up. These made Gillam forget furs and fear shipwreck. He turned about and made for home. The young Frenchmen were disappointed, but they were not discouraged.

Boston was already a busy port, where they might obtain other vessels. They hired two in the spring of 1665. Again they were disappointed. Before they were ready to embark, the vessels sailed away, their captains seeking other ventures.

Although they did not know it, Radisson and Groseilliers were trying to set out from the wrong place. The trade which



The "Nonsuch."



they desired to establish required a great deal of capital. New England did not have it then. Nor did New England have any manufactures at that time. This meant that all the goods for the Indians would have to be brought out from England to Boston and then from Boston to the bay, a very roundabout route.

It happened that some English government officials were then visiting Boston. They met the adventurers, were attracted by their stories, and invited them to come over to England. Radisson and Groseilliers were now on the right track. Old England had what New England lacked, the capital and the goods for the Indian trade. When they arrived in London, the king received them kindly and promised them a ship. But Charles II was better at making promises than at keeping them, and they might never have seen any ship if they had not aroused the interest of some other people, including a few of the greatest men in the realm. The king's cousin, Prince Rupert, the



Prince Rupert.  
From a painting by Vandyke.

king's brother, the Duke of York, who later became James II, and many lesser men became very enthusiastic about establishing a fur business on the shores of Hudson Bay. According to Radisson and Groseilliers, who knew what they were talking about, great fortunes could be made in that way. Therefore, these Englishmen—princes, courtiers, and merchants—invested some of their own money in fitting out a trading expedition.

Two vessels dropped down the Thames in June, 1668. In a few days they were out on the broad Atlantic, steering for Hudson Bay, but both were not to arrive that year. They ran into very heavy weather, and one of them, the *Eaglet* of the Royal Navy, sprang a leak and had to return. As she limped into port she carried a most disappointed man, Radisson. The other vessel weathered the storm and reached the strait after a voyage of two months. For a fortnight she threaded the perilous passage, and then made for the spot where Hudson had wintered more than half a century before. There, at the end of August, she dropped anchor. This was the *Nonsuch* of Boston, under her old captain Gillam and with Groseilliers on board.

The experience of the Frenchman was now very valuable. Under his direction, a log fort was soon built, such as he had been familiar with in his many years of trade with the natives. They called it Fort Charles after the king, and in it they stored all the merchandise with which they were to buy furs from the Indians. Some of the latter appeared only a few days after the party had landed, but were not at all friendly or inclined to enter into trade. This had been their attitude towards all the expeditions to the bay since Hudson's day, and it might have made this expedition a failure if Groseilliers had not been along. None of the rest knew how to treat the natives, but he had lived with them for many years and knew exactly what to do. He flattered them with words that tickled their ears, and he gave them presents that made their eyes dance. Thus he won their confidence and made them anxious to trade. Away they went to their wigwams, promising to bring back heaps of furs and to spread among their neighbours the glad tidings of the arrival of friends.

This was a hopeful beginning, but it did not satisfy the old *coureur de bois*. During the fall and winter, he made many a journey into the country, visiting all the tribes that he could

reach and persuading them to come down to the coast to trade. Just as a farmer tills the soil thoroughly to get the biggest crop, so was Groseilliers cultivating the friendship of the natives to reap a rich harvest of furs. It came in the spring. From far and near, loaded with packs of peltries, the Indians crowded into the fort. When the *Nonsuch* weighed anchor for the homeward voyage, the cargo beneath her decks was worth many times that which she had carried on her way out.

There was great excitement when the *Nonsuch* returned to England in 1669. The profits of the venture were enormous. Like wild-fire the news spread that fortunes in furs were waiting on the shores of Hudson Bay. Those who had paid the expenses and now shared the profits of the expedition began to fear that many others from England and elsewhere would rush out to the bay. Naturally they felt that this ought to be their own place, because they had discovered its value and had spent a great deal of money in the effort. To keep all others out, they appealed to the king.

They asked King Charles to give them sole control over Hudson Bay and the country around it, and he granted their request. On May 2nd, 1670, he signed the famous charter of the Hudson's Bay Company and gave it to Prince Rupert, the first governor or head of the company. This, by the way, is the origin of the name Rupert's Land, for the land was given to him and his associates.

This charter, which stood for two centuries, gave three great things to the company—a monopoly of the trade, the ownership of the land, and the right of government in all the territory drained by the rivers emptying into Hudson Bay, an area as large as Europe, although none of them knew it. Thus did the Hudson's Bay Company become the lord of the Canadian



Arms of the Hudson's Bay Company.

North-West, though many years were to pass before it tried to establish its rule over this great land.

Some people have said that this charter was a bad thing. But was it very different really from what happens to-day? When a man makes an invention, he takes out a patent to prevent others from using it, so that he may have all the profit to himself. And when gold or oil is discovered, we allow men to stake out claims to which others from that moment have no right. This charter of 1670 explains the whole thing very clearly. The king granted to "The Governor and Company of Adventurers of England trading into Hudson's Bay" what he did, because the men who formed it had undertaken, as the charter says, "at their own great cost and charges," an expedition which promised to bring "very great advantage" to England. The charter was "for their further encouragement."

## CHAPTER V

### *How the English nearly lost Hudson Bay.*

During the next few years, the Hudson's Bay Company built half a dozen or so log forts at different points around the bay. They placed them at the mouths of rivers, which were the highways of the Indians. In these forts, employees of the company lived the year round, trading with the natives whenever they brought any furs. The spring was usually the busiest time. Then the greatest number of Indians came down the rivers, their canoes loaded with the result of their winter's hunt. In the summer, one, two, perhaps three, vessels arrived to bear away the stock of furs that had accumulated and to replenish the stock of provisions that had been used up during the year.

These Englishmen had no thought of pushing into the country, even though it had been given to them. In those days it had no value except as a land where furs could be gathered. Because the Indians collected the furs and brought them down to the coast, the white man did not need to go inland at all.

One might think that the company had an easy time of it, sitting on the coast and making enormous profits. The guns, hatchets, knives, beads, and other trinkets cost them little, but were of great value to the Indians. On the other hand, the furs were of little value to the Indians, but fetched great prices at home, where they were sold by public auction. In those days, instead of banging a hammer, the auctioneer lighted a candle, usually an inch long, and awarded the lot that was for sale to the highest bidder before the wick fell. The first auction was held at Garroway's coffee house, London,

at the close of 1671, and was a famous event, drawing a crowd of distinguished people.

During the greater part of its history, the company has been unable to reap the full advantage of the great difference in value between the two sides of the Atlantic. Rivals appeared



—Courtesy of the Hudson's Bay Company.  
The first public auction of furs.

on the scene almost immediately after the charter was granted. The French in Canada were at once aroused. Their only paying business was the fur trade. The English were now in a position where they could draw more and more furs to the shores of the bay. This would starve the Canadian trade and

ruin New France. Therefore, Talon, the great intendant of New France, sent spies overland to watch the English and, if possible to strike them a blow in the rear. This was quite a successful move. The French knew better than the English how to handle the Indians; and they persuaded many of them to carry their packs to the traders who came up from Canada instead of to the English down on the bay. Now the company suffered for sticking to the coast instead of going inland. The stream of furs that was pouring down to them began to dry up.

At the same time, Frontenac, the famous governor, tried another plan which also succeeded. It was to win back Radisson and Groseilliers. What they had done might they not undo? Here Frontenac found a weak point in the company. These two French founders of the English fur trade were discontented. They were only receiving wages, while they were helping others to build up the fortunes that they had dreamed of making for themselves. Therefore, they were easily tempted to desert to their own people.



Pierre Radisson.

In the fall of 1674, they slipped across the English Channel. They hoped to create as much interest in the French court as they had stirred in the English court a few years before. But the French government would not listen to their appeals, because it suspected them. Radisson had married the daughter of one of the leading men in the English company. This, together with the fact that they were already twice traitors, made French officials in Paris think that they might turn traitor again. Discouraged at the court, these two men turned to the colony. New France had very much smaller resources

than the mother country, but she felt the danger more keenly and, therefore, would be more likely to assist them.

In Canada they were provided with two crazy craft in which they sailed to the bay in the summer of 1682. On their arrival, they made for the Hayes River, and, about fifteen miles upstream, they found shelter for their ships. There Groseilliers began to build a fort to be the centre of their trade. Meanwhile, Radisson paddled up the river to find the Indians. After a week's journey, he came upon them. To the chief, he presented a musket, powder, and shot, and to each of his braves he gave a knife. These gifts won their friendship and their promise to come down to the fort to trade. Radisson now returned to his brother-in-law, little knowing the excitements that were in store for them.

On the very day that he arrived back at the fort, they were startled by the sound of a big gun. Leaping into a canoe, Radisson shot down the river, but could see nothing unusual. Then came another bang—this time clearly from the north. With three companions, he made his way cautiously across the tongue of land that separated the Hayes River from the lower reaches of the Nelson River. He found a party of men on a little island in the Nelson, and their ship anchored hard by. They did not belong to the Hudson's Bay Company, but were poachers who had come from Boston. Their leader was Benjamin Gillam, a son of Zachary. Very probably the father, who was a servant of the company, had given the son a hint.

Radisson was a man who was ready for any emergency. Putting on a bold front, he told young Gillam that he was the special representative of the king of France and had a strong force in the neighbourhood. He also informed him that he had absolute command over the Indians. The young man from Boston, even if he did not know Radisson, must have heard a great deal about him from Zachary's lips, for the Frenchman was undoubtedly a great family hero in the Gillam household.



Radisson pretended to be friendly to the son of his old friend, offering to let him spend the winter there and to keep the Indians from attacking him. Having properly impressed the young New Englander, Radisson and his men embarked in their canoe. To put their rivals off the scent, the Frenchmen did not retrace their steps, but headed for the mouth of the Nelson.

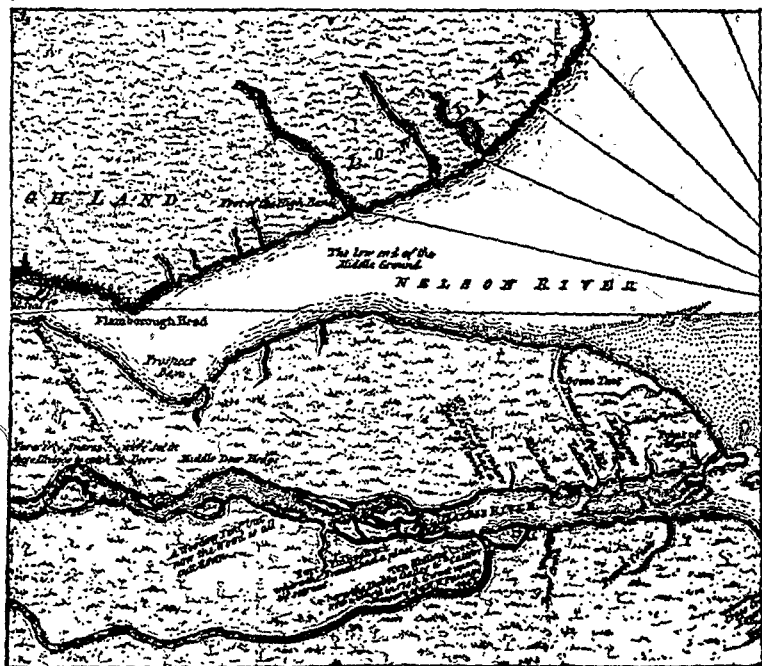
There a second surprise awaited them. Another vessel was just entering the river! It was a Hudson's Bay Company ship commanded by Zachary Gillam himself and bearing John Bridgar. Bridgar had come out to build Fort Nelson and to be its first governor. Again the wily Frenchman played his game of bluff, pretending to Governor Bridgar that he was in command of a large expedition, and then he withdrew.

What were the Frenchmen to do? They seemed to be caught like rats in a trap. Escape was impossible. The two leaky vessels which had brought them from the St. Lawrence had barely held together during the voyage. They had to remain, but what chance had they, a small company in a weak fort, just a few miles from the English who had superior strength and numbers?

But wits can do wonders, and Radisson had wits. The first thing that he had to do was to keep the two English vessels from coming together. This he managed in the following manner. He told the New Englanders of the arrival of the company's ship in the river below them. As they had no right to be in the bay and were liable to have their ship and cargo confiscated, they lay low, giving the men from England a wide berth. But would not the latter find them? This, too, Radisson guarded against. He persuaded Benjamin Gillam to put on an Indian disguise and took him on a visit to his father. Zachary was now alarmed lest his son should be discovered, and, therefore, did his best to keep Bridgar and the other members of his company from going upstream. But these ruses

protected the Frenchmen only for a while. They had to do something more, for they could not hope to stay a year without being found out.

Radisson now decided to master each in turn. Catching the New Englanders off their guard, some of his men rushed into



From an early map.

The mouths of the Hayes and Nelson Rivers.

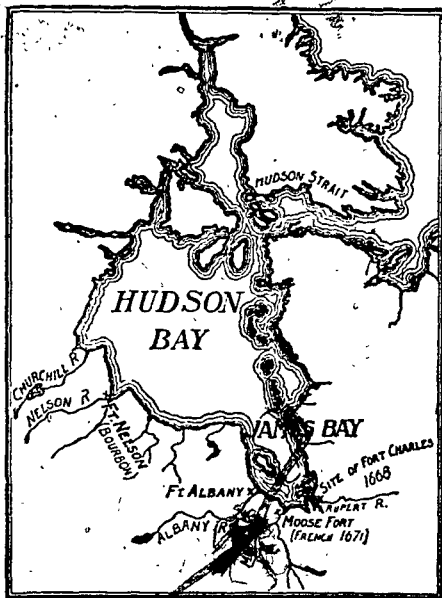
their fort and seized it. Then followed some months of parleying with Bridgar, whose fort was now erected. At last Radisson found his chance and took this also by surprise.

In the spring of 1683, the Indians poured down the two rivers, and the French gathered all their furs. These they stowed away with their prisoners in the only vessel that had

survived the ice and the storms of winter, Benjamin Gillam's ship, and in it Radisson and Groseilliers sailed away. They had no intention of abandoning the bay. They had just established themselves and intended to come back. Therefore, they left a few men under Groseilliers' son in their fort, which they named Bourbon after the ruling house in France.

On the bay they had met with surprises which had all turned out well, but in the St. Lawrence they met with one that did not. Their old patron, Frontenac, was gone, and there was a new governor who knew not these hardy adventurers. He confiscated their furs and ordered them to report to the home government for attacking the English, with whom the French were then at peace. Just as they had done twenty years before, they again set out for Paris, hoping to have their wrongs righted, but all that they found was mercy for their sins.

The two companions of the wilderness now parted company. Groseilliers returned to spend his declining years in Canada. Radisson deserted back to the English company and his English wife, both of whom received him with open arms. In the spring of 1684, he accompanied an English expedition to the bay to undo his work of the previous year.



Map of Hudson Bay.

Great was the astonishment of the Frenchmen at Fort Bourbon when their old leader appeared and demanded their surrender. Had he had a stronger force, young Groseilliers would have shot his traitorous uncle, but he and his little company were helpless. Therefore, with very unwilling hearts, they hauled down the *fleur-de-lis* and saw the English ensign rise to take its place.

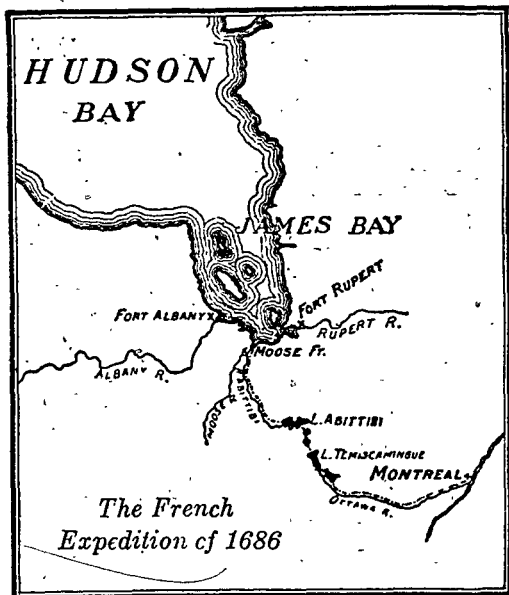
Up to this point, Radisson is an outstanding figure in the story of the Hudson's Bay Company. Now he retires into the background. Having first established the English on the bay, then brought the French there, and finally driven the latter off, he had done all that he could do. Nothing remained for this prince of rogues and heroes except to spend the good income which the company now gave him, and this was very easy for him. He was a born spendthrift, and he died a pauper sometime after the close of the century which had rung with his exploits.

Meanwhile, the French in Canada were furious with this triple traitor. They set a price on his head, but he did not offer it, preferring to wear it as long as possible. More effective than setting a price on Radisson's head was the sending of two more vessels from Quebec to the bay in 1685, though at first it seemed as if they could do nothing. From their arrival to the end of the summer they wandered around the bay, seeking in vain to draw the Indians into trade.

What was the matter? Had the French so suddenly lost their superior understanding of the Indian mind? No, it was simply that the natives found it more profitable to trade with the English. They offered five hatchets for a beaver skin, while the French offered no more than two or three. This was not because the French were less generous. It was because their goods cost more in France than the same goods in England, and then they had to pay double freight, first to Canada and then to the bay, while the English shipped direct

to the bay. This meant that the French could not trade so long as the English were present, and it exasperated them.

Returning empty-handed through the strait, these two vessels from Quebec encountered a Hudson's Bay Company ship laden with supplies. England and France were then at peace, but the temptation was too great for the reckless Frenchmen. They pounced upon the English vessel, captured her after some bloodshed, and carried her off as a prize to Quebec where her crew were kept prisoners for a while. Meanwhile, Canadian spies had once more gone overland to the bay. They were well received at Fort Albany until the news of this outrage arrived. Then they were treated as they deserved, and this further enraged the French on the St. Lawrence.



As soon as the spring of 1686 broke up the ice in the rivers, a hundred men, two-thirds of them Indians, left Montreal to break up the English forts in the North, under the Chevalier de Troyes. Over stream and portage they travelled for three months. Then they burst like a whirlwind upon the unsuspecting English. Fort Moose, at the south-west corner of James Bay, was the first to fall. The sentinel was asleep. One blow killed him, and in a trice the garrison were all prisoners. Fort Charles, the

oldest on the bay, fell almost as quickly. They next attacked Fort Albany. It was the company's strongest post, but it could not hope to stand against these wild assailants. With English cannon that they had just seized they blew a hole in the English walls, and the English surrendered.

The victors would have taken Fort Nelson too, the only other post, if they could have reached there. But that was eight hundred miles away, and they could not find officers competent to command the two vessels which they had captured. Thus, the French did not quite clear the English out of the bay. But they wrought terrible vengeance, and they captured over fifty thousand beaver skins. As they could not themselves carry all this plunder, they forced some of their prisoners to help bear it back to New France.

England and France were still at peace, but Englishmen and Frenchmen could not keep from fighting in America. Soon, however, there was a real war between the two countries, and then the fighting up on the bay was bitterer still. We shall not try to follow it, because forts were captured and re-captured in a most bewildering manner. But there was one thing about it that was most interesting, and that was the work of Pierre Le Moyne, Sieur d'Iberville. He had been only one of the leaders of the expedition in 1686; now he was the leading hero.

His most famous exploit was in 1697. That year opened with the French holding all the forts except Nelson and Albany, and they hoped to capture even these before the summer was over. The English, on the other hand, were anxious to recover some of their losses. Therefore, as the summer came on, there was a race for the bay. Both the English and the French fleets reached the strait at the same time. Both were gripped in the ice—within sight of each other.

The first vessel to break loose was the *Pelican*, bearing the French commander d'Iberville. She made straight for Fort Nelson, which the English had just recovered for the second

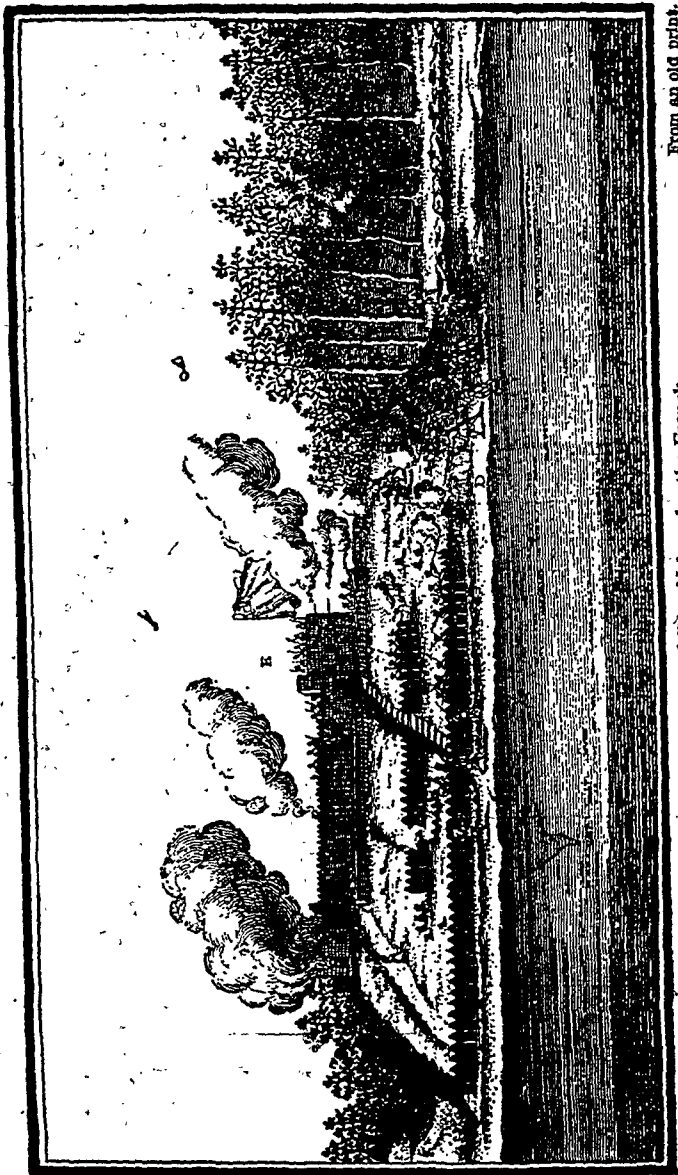
time during the previous six years. Arriving alone, d'Iberville waited a few days for his other ships to join him in the attack. Then, fearing that they had fallen a prey to the ice or to the English, he decided to attempt the task single-handed. At this moment, he descried three sails on the horizon, and his heart leaped within him. Joyful at the thought of joining his companions, whom he had given up as lost, he weighed anchor and dashed off to greet them.

Suddenly, as he was bearing down upon them, he saw that they were not his own but some of the English fleet—the *Hampshire*, the *Dering*, and the *Hudson's Bay*. The first was about the size of his own vessel; the others were somewhat smaller. It was now September, and autumnal gales were sweeping across the cold waters of the bay, and here he was, caught between the English on land and on sea. There was no escape except through victory.

D'Iberville shot straight at the *Hampshire*, hoping to grapple and board her. But the latter's captain dodged him, and he swept past to pour broadsides into the *Dering* and the *Hudson's Bay*. Realizing that his only chance lay in dealing with the strongest vessel first, he veered round and struck at the *Hampshire* again. Of course, the *Pelican* suffered severely. Her sails were riddled, her masts were splintered, her hull was torn, and forty of her men lay wounded or dead. But d'Iberville would perish with all on board rather than surrender. At close range, his gunners ripped great holes in the *Hampshire's* hull. The latter began to take water and soon could not stand erect. Then down she went to the bottom of the sea. Not a man was saved. The *Pelican*, which barely escaped being sucked down



D'Iberville.



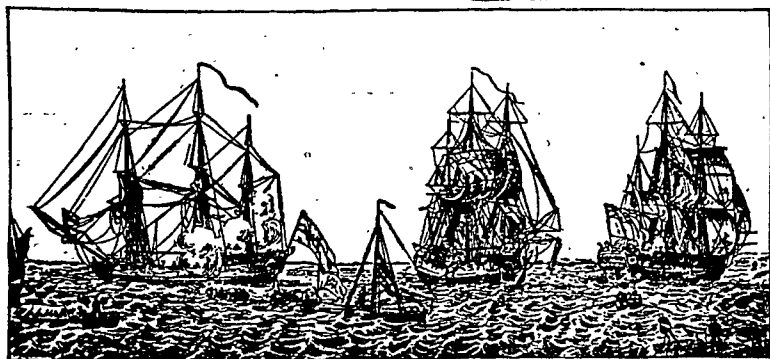
The capture of Fort Nelson by the French.

From an old print.



after her, turned on the remaining vessels. The *Dering* pressed on every inch of sail and escaped, the *Pelican* being too shattered to follow. But the *Hudson's Bay* was too crippled to flee and had to strike her colours.

While the battle raged, a great storm blew up, and now it grew fiercer than ever. The two lame vessels, the *Pelican* and her prize, the *Hudson's Bay*, were forced to cast anchor on a lee shore; but the fury of the elements snapped their cables and piled them up utter wrecks. The crews scrambled to land



Hampshire

Hudson's Bay

Dering

The ships of the Hudson's Bay Company.

through icy waters and were almost as helpless as the ships which were being dashed to pieces. So great was their suffering from exposure that twenty men died almost at once. The survivors had no means of erecting shelters for themselves and had scarcely a bite to eat.

Staring death in the face, this forlorn company could see no escape except by taking Fort Nelson. Therefore, with arms and ammunition salvaged from the wreck, d'Iberville prepared to lead his starving and exhausted men in a desperate assault. Then, as if Heaven wished to reward them for their bravery, three of the missing French ships hove in sight. Now the

tables were turned, for the fresh forces were more than a match for the English behind their walls. Fort Nelson fell to the French, and only Fort Albany remained to the English.

These were dark days for the company and critical years in the history of this country. At the very time when French enemies nearly drove the company out of the bay, English enemies nearly drove it out of business at home. Inspired by jealousy, the latter used all their influence at court and in parliament to have the charter cancelled. Had they succeeded, England would have lost her footing on the bay, and the territory lying beyond it—the Canadian North-West—might have become French instead of British. In fighting for its own life, the Hudson's Bay Company was fighting the battle of the British Empire. Fortunately, it held off its foes at home and clung to Fort Albany until the long crisis passed.

The fate of this country was finally settled far away on European battlefields, where the Duke of Marlborough won great fame. Thoroughly beaten, the king of France gave back the posts which his subjects had taken and gave up all claim to Hudson Bay. This was by the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713. The company now settled down to a peaceful possession of its trade—for a while.

## CHAPTER VI

### *The first White Men on the Prairie.*

For more than a hundred years after Charles II had granted this country to the Hudson's Bay Company, the Indians were left in full possession. During the first sixty years, only one white man had penetrated into the interior. He was Henry Kelsey, a London street urchin whom the company had picked up and shipped to the mouth of the Nelson. He must have been quite a remarkable boy, because the officials of the company in England soon heard enough about him to order Governor Geyer of Fort Nelson to send him on an important mission. He was to go up to the Churchill River to open trade there. The letter to the governor said: "We are informed he is a very active lad, delighting much in Indians' company, being never better pleased than when he is travelling amongst them." This was in 1688. For a long time it was not known whether he went or not. Now, however, we know that he went to the mouth of the Churchill, and that he travelled far inland without seeing a soul.

The next we hear of him is in 1690, when Geyer reported that he had just sent him "into the Country of the Assinae Poets (most probably the Assiniboina), with the Captain of that Nation, to call, encourage, and invite the remoter Indians to trade with us." A year later, Geyer said that he had received a letter from Kelsey informing him that the Indians were on the war path, but that he would gather what beaver pelts he could and bring them down in the following season. In 1692, he wrote that Kelsey "came down with a good fleet of Indians, and hath travelled and endeavoured to keep the peace among the Indians according to my orders."



From a painting by C. W. Jefferys, by courtesy of the Hudson's Bay Company.

Kelsey's first sight of the buffalo.

As Kelsey had no surveying instruments and there were no maps of the country, he had only a general idea of where he was. But he kept a diary, which has recently been discovered, and, from his descriptions of the country through which he passed, we know that he went to the lower reaches of the Saskatchewan River and wandered over the eastern part of what is now the province of Saskatchewan. He was the first white man to see and join in the buffalo hunt, the first to visit some of the western tribes, and the first to attempt any exploration of the country.

Forty years and more now passed before another white man set foot on this great land. We have already seen why the English did not come. To procure the firearms on which they now depended, the Indians were glad to travel with their furs all the way down to the coast. Therefore, the Englishmen could sit still in their forts on the bay and wait for the arrival of the hunters with their packs.

But why did not the French come up from Canada? They had already enjoyed a taste of this rich northern trade, and one would think that they would seek it again. Although the Treaty of Utrecht excluded them from the bay, they could go by canoe into the heart of the continent. They had gone overland to the bay, and they were already well established around Lake Superior—half way to the West. Why not all the way?

They were very slow in getting in behind the company, however, because of the two great obstacles already mentioned. They had to pay more for their goods in France than the English did for theirs in England, and they had to pay more than double freight charges on both goods and furs, because they went by a longer and more difficult route. The farther they pushed inland, the more did the expense eat into the profit of the trade. They might never have reached the far West before the conquest of their country by the British, had it not been for the vision and perseverance of one individual.

The man who really opened the door of Western Canada was not an Englishman but a Frenchman. No one followed in Kelsey's footsteps, but many followed the trail blazed by La Vérendrye. Pierre Gaultier, Sieur de La Vérendrye, was the son of the governor of Three Rivers. He entered the



Pierre de La Vérendrye.  
From the statue, Legislative Buildings,  
Winnipeg.

French army at the age of twelve. Sixteen years afterwards, the Treaty of Utrecht ended all chance of active service and promotion for a while. Leaving the army, he turned to the next best thing—the fur trade. After a few years, he found himself commanding the trading post of Nipigon, just north of Lake Superior.

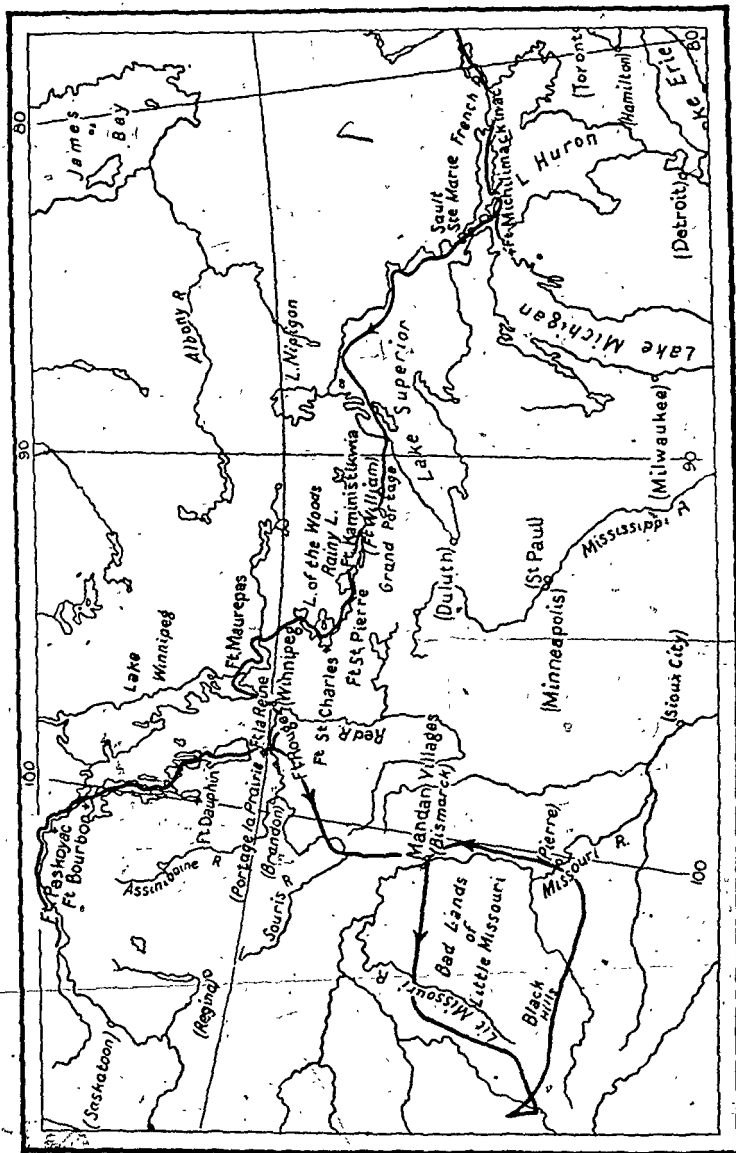
We must remember that no one yet knew what the vast interior of the continent was like. From time to time the Indians told stories of great western rivers flowing into the sea. These stories fell upon La Vérendrye's ears and filled him with a burning desire to explore the way across the continent. Turning to the government, he offered to do it if his expenses were paid. But all that the government would do was to give him a monopoly of the trade beyond Lake Superior, from the profits of which he might pay his own expenses. Although this meant years instead of months to do what he wanted, La Vérendrye leaped to the task. He began by spending all his own money and borrowing as much as he could to outfit his expedition.

In the summer of 1731, he set out from Montreal, taking with him his three sons, Jean-Baptiste, Pierre, and François, and his nephew, La Jemeraye, besides a considerable number of voyageurs whom he had hired. By August they were on Lake Superior where their work was to commence, and at once La Vérendrye's troubles began, for some of his voyageurs refused to go on over strange waters.

During the first year, La Jemeraye built Fort St. Pierre, named after his uncle and leader. This was on Rainy Lake, where he gathered a cargo of skins. La Vérendrye himself then pushed beyond to the Lake of the Woods. There he planted another trading post, which he called Fort St. Charles in honour of the governor of Canada, Charles, Marquis de Beauharnois. In the winter of 1732-1733, he sent his eldest son and his nephew on to the mouth of the Red River where they built Fort Maurepas, which was the name of the French colonial minister.

The blows of fate now fell heavily on the head of poor La Vérendrye. He was pushing on so fast and so far that he was losing money instead of making it. He now found that he had lost all his own money and a great deal that he had borrowed. He could not pay his debts to the merchants in Montreal, and these creditors were now like a millstone around his neck. They clamoured for furs, and only as he satisfied them could he proceed. On top of these worries came terrible news. Up near Fort Maurepas, La Jemeraye lay dead, killed by over-exertion and exposure. Then his eldest son disappeared. He and all his party were murdered by the Sioux. Some men might have thrown up their hands in despair, but La Vérendrye was a hero.

In those days of travel by canoe, Lake Winnipeg was the centre of the northern half of this continent. The Winnipeg River led to the east, the Red to the south, the Saskatchewan to the west, and the Hayes and the Nelson to the shores of





Hudson Bay. Out from this strategic centre, La Vérendrye and his sons now pressed. By 1738 they had built a post on the Assiniboine River, near the present Portage la Prairie, and another at the forks of the Red and the Assiniboine Rivers where the city of Winnipeg now stands. The first they named Fort La Reine in honour of the queen of France, and the second they called Fort Rouge after the river.

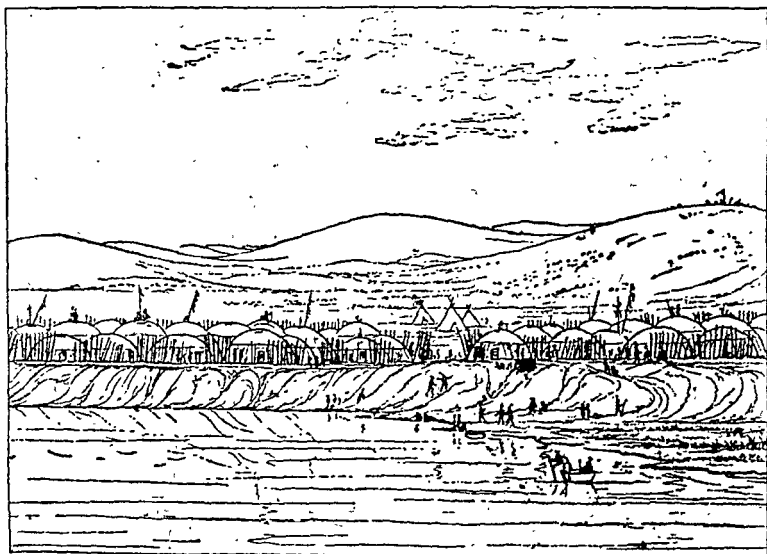
From Fort La Reine, La Vérendrye visited the Mandans on the Missouri, a remarkable tribe of agricultural Indians, few of whom are living to-day. He had heard much about them and hoped that they might give him guides to lead him to the Western Sea. But they could tell him nothing. He could not go any further, because his interpreter ran away with the presents that were necessary to win the friendship of strange tribes. He left with the Mandans two men, and they returned in the following year with startling news. There was a tribe far off in the south-west who dwelt by waters that were unfit to drink!

In 1742, he sent ~~Pierre and François~~ back to the Mandans that they might follow up ~~the~~ clue. They were gone for over a year, but where they went was a puzzle until 1913, when a little girl in South Dakota turned up a leaden plate which they had buried there in 1743. Until this discovery, many people supposed that they had caught a tempting glimpse of the jagged teeth of the Rocky Mountains. But now we are fairly certain that the mountains which they saw were the Black Hills in South Dakota.

La Vérendrye was also feeling out towards the north-west and by 1739 became acquainted with the great river of the prairie, the Saskatchewan. How soon he saw it we do not know; nor do we know how he reached it. Some think that he followed what was then a well-known Indian trail from Fort la Reine via Lake Winnipegosis, because his sons built a fort along this route in 1741. This was Fort Dauphin on Lake Dauphin,

both named after the heir to the French throne. But at the same time he planted another post to the east of that trail—Fort Bourbon on Cedar Lake near the mouth of the Saskatchewan. Others, therefore, think that he went over Lake Winnipeg up to the Saskatchewan.

Then, just as he had set foot upon the broad highway of the West, his creditors began to drag him down. They wanted



From Catlin's "North American Indians."

A Mandan village.

western furs, not the Western Sea. Because he would not give up his mad exploring notions, they determined to make him give up the whole business. They had him in their power, for he was hopelessly in debt to them. Broken in body and fortune, poor La Vérendrye appealed to the governor to relieve the pressure of his debts, and the governor pleaded with the home government. It was all in vain. Hopeless and helpless, the

great explorer was forced to resign his commission in 1743 and see another man take his place.

Fortunately, Pierre and François continued to serve under the new master. They had their father's vision and spirit, and, at the end of five years, they pushed up the Saskatchewan to where the northern and the southern branches join. They had reached a commanding position. There the Crees gathered regularly in council, and there a great stream of furs was concentrated. To stop this river of wealth from flowing on to the bay and to turn it off towards the St. Lawrence, these Frenchmen founded a fort at The Pas.

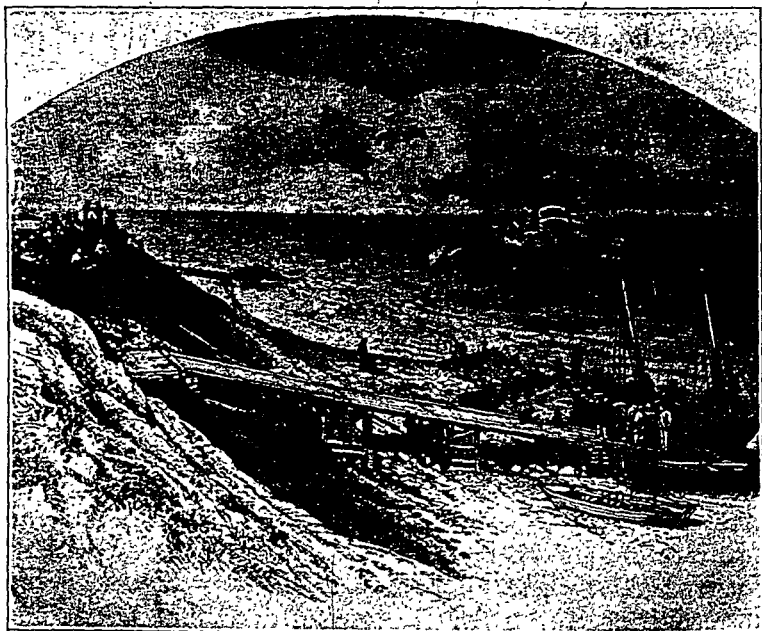
Here their work stopped at the very moment when fortune seemed to smile upon them. In 1749, the French government discovered and rectified its mistake. The king sent La Vérendrye the Cross of St. Louis, a much-coveted honour, and the colonial minister ordered the governor of Canada to place him once more in charge of western exploration. His youngest son now joined him in Montreal, and with greater eagerness than ever they looked forward to the spring of 1750, when they might embark for the land of the setting sun.

But no La Vérendrye was ever to see the West again. Before the New Year was born, the father was dead, and with him died the hopes of his sons. A new and strange governor had recently arrived. His heart was set on the profits of the fur trade, and, therefore, he forbade the sons to return—even to recover the personal property which they had left behind. Thus did greed of gain, which had for ever dogged their footsteps, banish this famous family from the field of their heroic efforts.\*

The story of French exploits in the North-West now draws to a close. Another fort was built on the Saskatchewan about

\*The story of the Vérendryes as related in the text has long been told. Material which has only recently come to light makes us suspect, however, that it is not all the truth. It is altogether probable that La Vérendrye was really more interested in trade than he was in discovery, and that the men who were regarded as his enemies were only his jealous rivals.

twenty miles below the forks, and, in 1751, a party of Frenchmen made a dash up the Saskatchewan towards the Rocky Mountains. They built a fort, but nobody knows where it was—whether it was above or below Calgary or Edmonton. This journey was the only sign of interest in exploration during the ten years that preceded the conquest of Canada. But the



Arrival of vessels of the Hudson's Bay Company at York Factory.

trade which La Vérendrye had established continued. Though it never paid very well because of the long trek to the St. Lawrence, it was sufficient to keep the western posts alive. Then the curtain drops with the fall of New France, and all our information about these posts suddenly ends.

Where were the men of the Hudson's Bay Company during these years when the French were pressing in behind them?

They were still reposing in their posts on the bay, and so comfortably that they found it hard to waken. In 1720, they stirred in their sleep and founded Henley House over a hundred miles up the Albany River. This was to checkmate the French traders who were working out from Lake Superior.

In 1754, they really stretched themselves when Anthony Hendry was sent into the heart of the West to recover the trade that the French were stealing away. No ordinary servant of the company would undertake such a daring task, but Hendry was both fearless and reckless. Born in the Isle of Wight, where smugglers abounded, he had become a smuggler, was caught, and was made an outlaw for it. This was in 1748, and probably he was only half-tamed yet.

With a party of four hundred Indians gathered for the purpose, Hendry set out in June, 1754, from York Factory, which had taken the place of the old Fort Nelson. Threading a maze of lakes and rivers, he made his way to the Saskatchewan, some distance above the point where it flows into Cedar Lake. Paddling upstream a few miles, he came to a French fort, probably the one at The Pas. There he met with a kind reception, which perhaps surprised him but not his Indian guide. The latter smiled and told his master that the French did not dare to treat them otherwise. After a pleasant entertainment of a couple of days, during which they exchanged presents, the Englishman giving tobacco and his host giving moose flesh, Hendry resumed his journey.

Within a week, he cached his canoes on the Carrot River and proceeded by land, to the unspeakable joy of the natives. They were sick of fish, on which they had lived for weeks, and they hungered for a feast of buffalo or deer. Striking south-west along the Carrot River valley, he reached the Southern Saskatchewan and crossed it somewhere north of Saskatoon. Then he veered off in the general direction of Battleford, but turned south-west again on reaching the Northern Saskatche-

wan. On he wandered over the sea-like plains between the two rivers, where never a white man had set foot before.

He was following the trail of some Blackfeet who were hunting a herd of buffalo, and at last he caught up with them. When he left York Factory, Hendry had never heard of Indians on horseback, and, therefore, he was burning with curiosity to see these mounted hunters. Indeed, when he returned to the



From Catlin's "North American Indians."  
Hunting the buffalo.

bay and recounted his experiences among the Blackfeet, the men in York Factory thought that he had been suffering from an attack of delirium or of imagination.

No less interesting was the buffalo hunt which he recorded in his journal: "I went with the young men a-buffalo hunting, all armed with bows and arrows; killed several; fine sport. We beat them about, lodging twenty arrows in one beast. So expert are the natives that they will take the arrows out of

them when they are foaming with pain, and tearing the ground up with their feet and horns until they fall down."

When winter descended upon him, Hendry had crossed the Red Deer River and was just east of the present trail between Calgary and Edmonton. There he spent the winter months. In the spring, he travelled back by the Saskatchewan. Below the forks, he visited and supped at a French fort. Lower down he came to the fort where he had stopped on his way up. Again he was courteously entertained, although his Indians, drinking too much French firewater, lost all their wits and many of their furs. They recovered the first but not the second, and resumed their travels after a few days. In a fortnight, the bold leader was back within the walls of York Factory, having been gone almost a year.

For all their losses, the Indians who accompanied him arrived with a great quantity of furs, but Hendry's trip was not a complete success. He had gone not to trade but to induce the Indians to bring their peltries down to the bay. This he found very difficult. Again and again the natives answered his invitation by saying that it was much easier to trade with the French because they were nearer. Indeed, he acquired a wholesome respect for these rivals, for he wrote, "The French speak several (native) languages to perfection; they have the advantage of us in every shape; and if they had Brazile tobacco, which they have not, would entirely cut off our trade." Hendry's conclusion was ominous, but something happened which he did not foresee. Within five years Canada was conquered, and the French had disappeared from the West.

## CHAPTER VII

### *The White Men come to stay.*

At the mouth of the Churchill River stood a great stone fortress built in 1734 to replace a small log fort. This was Fort Prince of Wales commanded by Governor Moses Norton. Here the Athapaskans and the Indians who lived up in the North came to trade. From year to year they told tales of a river which flowed north to where there was an abundance of metal. Norton paid no attention to this talk until the natives showed him some real specimens of copper in 1768. Immediately he saw visions of treasure in the earth and reported them to the officials at home. They ordered the famous expedition of Samuel Hearne.

When only eleven years old, Hearne began life as a midshipman in the Royal Navy. About ten years afterwards he left the navy to enter the service of the Hudson's Bay Company and was sent out to the mouth of the Churchill River. He was now in the middle of his "twenties."

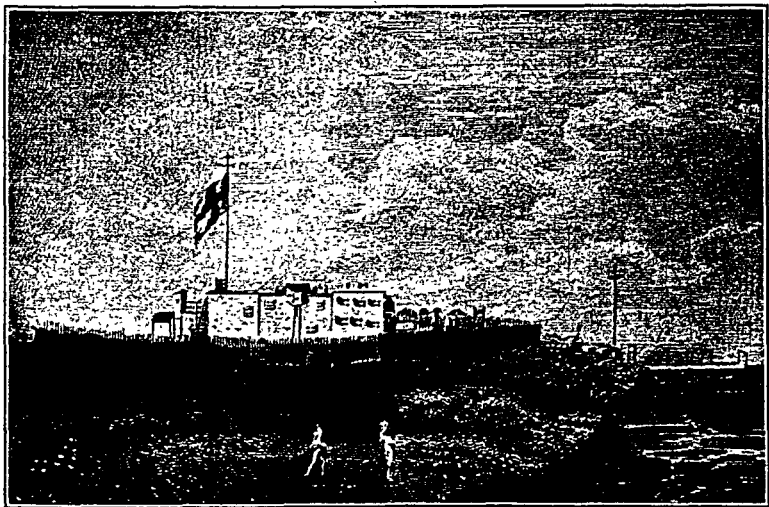
Three times Hearne set out from Fort Prince of Wales before he reached his destination. The first was in the fall of 1769. In a month he was back, because his Indian guides deserted him at the end of two hundred miles. In February, 1770, he set out again, travelling north-west over the barren lands, where there was only moss to cook the little food that they could find.

"We have fasted many times two whole days and nights," he wrote, "twice upwards of three days, and once, while at Shethaunee, near seven days, during which we tasted not a mouthful of anything but a few cranberries, water, scraps of



old leather, and burnt bones. On these pressing occasions I have frequently seen the Indians examine their wardrobe, which consisted chiefly of skin clothing, and consider what part could best be spared; sometimes a piece of an old, half-rotten deerskin, and at others a pair of old shoes, were sacrificed to alleviate extreme hunger."

When he had gone about five hundred miles, a gust of wind upset and smashed his quadrant. Without this instrument it



A south-west view of Fort Prince of Wales, Hudson Bay.

was useless to go on, because he would not be able to tell where he went. Therefore, he returned a second time in disgust.

He now met an old friend, an Indian chief named Matonabee, who explained his failure by telling him that no expedition could come to any good without women. "They," he said, "were made for labour; one of them carries or hauls as much as two men . . . Women, though they do everything, are maintained at a trifling expense, for, as they always act as cooks, the very

licking of their fingers in scarce times is sufficient for their subsistence."

Now Hearne took Matonabee as his guide and some women as a support to his party, and this time he succeeded. Matonabee's wise plan was to work westward, keeping clear of the barren lands until the spring brought the caribou back. This would give them a sure supply of food for the dash north.



Samuel Hearne.

When the spring and the caribou came, they dropped most of the women and baggage and struck north, reaching the Coppermine River about forty miles from its mouth in July, 1771.

Disappointment and tragedy awaited Hearne at the end of his journey. Instead of a mighty river, he found a stream that canoes could scarcely navigate. The copper mines, which he had come to see, he could not find at all. The Indians, however, found what they were looking for, and

disgusted the helpless Englishman by massacring a party of Eskimos whom they caught in their sleep.

Returning down the Yellowknife River, across Great Slave Lake and up the Slave River for forty miles, and then straight east, he again spent the winter in regions which are still unmapped. He reached Fort Prince of Wales in June, 1772, having been gone a year and a half. His expedition seems like a "wild goose chase," but it did much to clear up the geography of the far North, and it set a challenging example to other explorers to penetrate the unknown.

When Hearne returned from the Arctic, the men of the Hudson's Bay Company were becoming really worried by something that was happening out to the west. Their back door was being broken in. Over the network of lakes and rivers that covers the country, energetic traders were beginning to spread. They threatened to stop at its very source the stream of furs which flowed down to the bay and on which the company relied for its existence.

Who were these men? Where did they come from? Why were they so energetic? To answer these questions, we must turn our attention for a little to a great change that had come over Canada. At the end of the last chapter, we observed that the British conquest of Canada removed a danger to the Hudson's Bay Company by withdrawing the French traders from the West. But, after a very few years, the conquest of Canada resulted in an invasion of the West which was much more dangerous to the Hudson's Bay Company and changed the whole face of things in this great territory.

During the French régime, Montreal was famous as the greatest centre of the fur trade in America. It was so famous that immediately after the conquest a number of British speculators rushed in to make their fortunes in this trade. They came from New England, from Old England, and from Scotland, and most of them were very bold fellows. At once they made friends with the French traders and voyageurs. They took some into partnership and others into their pay. This combination of French and English recalls that which had created the Hudson's Bay Company. The French knew all the paths and the tricks of the trade; the English had the goods and the necessary capital.

The Montreal trade was now more vigorous than ever and able to stretch out farther than before the conquest. Almost immediately, traders were back on the Upper Lakes, where Montreal had secured the greatest quantity of furs, and they

seem to have been all ready for a spring into the West. Two things held them back. One was a regulation that they could not leave the garrisoned forts to trade, and Michilimackinac was the most distant of these posts. The other was Pontiac's Revolt, which broke out in 1763. This caused very heavy losses and stopped nearly all the trade from Canada until 1766. In that year the rebellion was suppressed, and in the following year traders were allowed to leave Michilimackinac to winter among the Indians.

At once they were out on the prairie, having come in by the door that La Vérendrye had opened. In the first year, fourteen canoes, each with a crew of four to ten men, set out from the Grand Portage, which lies about fifteen miles south-west of the present Fort William. All of them did not arrive, for some were plundered by the Indians on the way. But the next year more went, and within a dozen years forty canoes passed over this route every season.

Among those who got through in 1767 were James Finlay, Thomas Curry, Maurice Blondeau, a French Canadian, and Forrest Oakes or his partner Charles Boyez. Though these men are not as famous as the explorers, yet they are memorable as the pioneers of a trade that opened the country. From the little that is known of them, Finlay seems to have gone the farthest. He occupied the deserted French fort below the forks of the Saskatchewan. There he settled down for a while, living on the fat of the land, as we shall see, and gathering in the finest of the furs. In a few years he was able to retire to Montreal to live upon the fortune which he had made on the banks of the Saskatchewan.

Curry was working lower down, around Cedar Lake, and by 1772 he had stolen so much of the company's trade that the factor or governor of York Factory sent his second in command up to the Saskatchewan and the western plains. This was Mathew Cocking. He was unable to recover the lost

trade, but he brought back a very important report. These "pedlars," as all the company's men called them, were growing in number and activity, and he showed very clearly that they would ruin the company unless it wakened up. The days had gone by when it could wait for the Indians to come down to the coast. It must go to the Indians, and that very quickly, or it would be too late.

In this very year, on Cumberland Lake in between Finlay and Curry, another Montrealer built a temporary post. He was Joseph Frobisher, one of three remarkable brothers who emigrated from Yorkshire to Canada and played a leading part in developing the fur trade in the North-West. Two years later we find him farther north, up on the Churchill River. There he stopped the Indians on their way to the bay, and from them he got so many furs that he could not carry them all away that year and had to build a temporary fort to store them until his return.

In 1774, the year of Frobisher's inroads on the Churchill, the Hudson's Bay Company struck out at last. It sent Samuel Hearne up the Saskatchewan to build a post at a spot where it could most extend its trade and check that of its rivals. He selected a place on Cumberland Lake, where he erected Cumberland House. This was a thorn in the flesh to the traders from Canada, because it was at the cross-roads of the West. It controlled the communication with the vast territory to the west over the two branches of the Saskatchewan, with the north and north-west over a chain of lakes and rivers to Lake Athabaska and the Peace River country, with Hudson Bay to the east over the Nelson and Churchill Rivers, and with the south-east to Canada over Lakes Winnipeg, Winnipegosis, and Manitoba. It was the key to the whole country, and it was seized just in time.

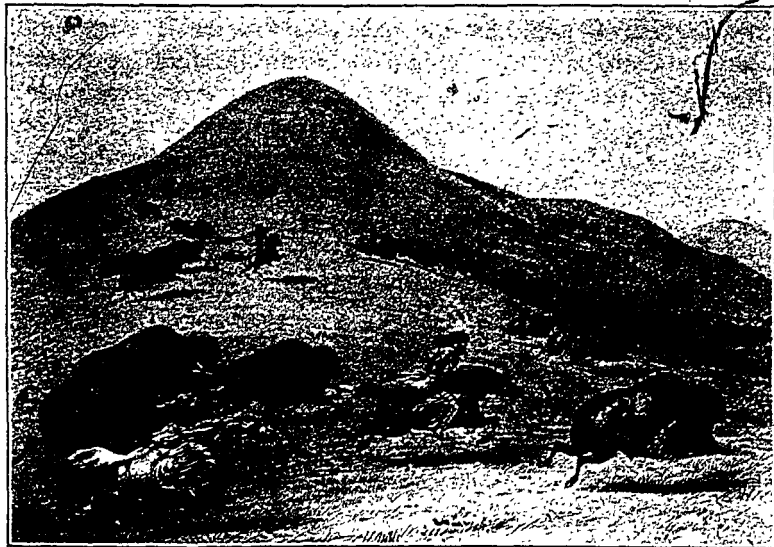
In October, 1775, a flotilla of canoes beached in front of Cumberland House, and a number of men stepped on shore.

Mathew Cocking, who was now in charge of the post, received his guests very civilly, but he wished that they had never set foot in the country. They were some of the most daring men from Montreal. Joseph Frobisher was there, and now he had his brother Thomas with him. Another was Peter Pond, a native of Connecticut, who was already "a trader of celebrity in the North-West." He was one of the wildest men who ever visited this land. Before he died, he had more than one murder to answer for. But the most famous of all this party was Alexander Henry.

There were two Alexander Henrys who engaged in the fur trade. This one has been called "the elder," to distinguish him from his nephew, who came twenty years afterwards. He was born in New Jersey and had been one of the first to appear on the Great Lakes after the conquest of Canada. There he was taken prisoner by the Indians when they seized Michilimackinac after their famous game of lacrosse. This man Henry was now to push farther afield than any Montrealer had yet gone.

At Cumberland House, Henry and the Frobishers parted company with Peter Pond. The latter went back to winter on Lake Dauphin, while they went on to the north. Their plan was to build a fort and spend the winter on Beaver Lake. But Henry was a man who could not lie idle all winter up in this country. Therefore, on New Year's Day, 1776, he set out with a few companions for a trip up the Saskatchewan. He retraced his steps as far as Cumberland House, where again he was Cocking's guest. From there he went up stream till he came to Finlay's House, where he saw something that surprised and pleased him greatly. At the Hudson's Bay Company's establishment, just a few days before, he had shared a meagre diet of fish. Here he sat down to a table loaded with venison, buffalo tongues, and marrow bones. The difference might well represent the difficult position of the English company. These Montrealers were skimming off the cream of the trade.

After a royal feast, he departed westward with a party of Assiniboin Indians bound for their winter camp. They travelled for a week, during which he had to struggle hard to keep up with the natives on their snow-shoes. Then they arrived in the village, where Henry was established in a lodge set apart for his own use. On the following day, he and his



—From Catlin's "North American Indians."

A buffalo chase.

fellow traders were invited to attend a buffalo hunt. His account of what he saw is one of the earliest descriptions of the business-like method employed by the Indians of the plains.

They built an enclosure "about four feet high, and formed of strong stakes of birch-wood, wattled with smaller branches of the same." Two lines of stakes commencing wide apart converged like a funnel on the opening. "At daylight several of the more expert hunters were sent to decoy the animals

into the pound. They were dressed in ox-skins (buffalo skins) with the hair and horns. Their faces were covered, and their gestures so closely resembled those of the animals themselves that, had I not been in the secret, I should have been as much deceived as the oxen." As soon as the herd of buffalo, or oxen as Henry called them, were within the pounds, the decoyers slipped out, the entrance was stopped, and the beasts were slaughtered wholesale by a shower of arrows. "The slaughter was prolonged till the evening, when the hunters returned to their tents. Next morning all the tongues were presented to



Alexander Henry.

the chief, to the number of seventy-two. The women brought the meat to the village on sledges drawn by dogs. The lumps on the shoulders, and the hearts as well as the tongues, were set apart for feasts, while the rest was consumed as ordinary food, or dried for sale at the fort."

In the spring, Henry was back with the Frobishers on Beaver Lake. This place did not please them; they did not get enough furs there. Therefore, they moved north over Frog Portage to the Churchill River, where they planted a permanent trading post. Then they pushed up the Churchill, determined to explore as far as Lake Athabaska, of which they had heard from the natives, unless they met the Indians with their furs on the way. They actually got as far as Ile à la Crosse Lake, more than half way to the Athabaska River, before they encountered a party of Athapaskan Indians coming down to the bay with their peltries. Turning back, these Montreal traders escorted the hunters to their fort at the end of Frog Portage, and there relieved them of the precious freight which had been intended for the Hudson's Bay Company.



Alexander Henry and Joseph Frobisher now set off for Lake Superior to carry their prize to Canada. Thomas Frobisher remained behind to spend the winter of 1776-1777 up on Ile à la Crosse Lake. There he built a make-shift post and gathered another rich harvest of furs.

A still more serious invasion occurred in 1778. A group of traders from the St. Lawrence met in the spring of that year somewhere on Cumberland Lake, where they pooled all their surplus goods and turned this common stock over to one of their number, Peter Pond. He agreed to carry it into the Athabaska country and there to erect a trading establishment in the most favourable spot.

Following the trail of Henry and the Frobishers to Ile à la Crosse Lake, Pond pushed on over a winding water route until he reached the height of land dividing the waters of the bay from those of the Arctic. Shouldering their canoes, Pond and his men carried them across the thirteen miles which were soon to be known as the picturesque Methye Portage. Embarking on the Clearwater River, they shortly floated out on the broad Athabaska River, and down this they paddled through a wonderful game country.

About thirty miles from where the river flows into Lake Athabaska, Pond found the spot that he was seeking. Immediately the party set to work, and before the winter caught them they were comfortably housed in the fort which was for a long time known as "The Old Establishment." For the next six years, Pond made this his centre as he wandered up and down the West from the Saskatchewan to Lake Athabaska. He was not long in finding this lake, and he may have been the first white man to discover the Peace River.

What was happening was something like a great game of chess, and the stakes were tremendous—the possession of this country. The company had made a shrewd move in building Cumberland House, but the Montrealers had matched it with

another by working up into the Athabaska region. Again they were in behind the company, and now they had broken into the richest pasture in the whole country. In those days, when furs were the only harvest of the North-West, the open prairie was not nearly so important as the wooded country to the north. Though countless herds of buffalo roamed over the prairie, their hides fetched the lowest price. Not the prairie but the north was the land of the beaver, whose skins were the most valuable of all. Pond had planted himself in the midst of this heaven of beaver.

One may wonder why the rivals could not work side by side, but this was impossible. Although the Canadian trade was no longer hampered by inferior French manufactures, geographical position was still its enemy. They all traded with English goods, which cost the same in the first place. But it cost more than twice as much to bring them from England to the West via Montreal as it did to bring them through Hudson Bay. This gave the Hudson's Bay Company a great advantage. It could offer the Indians more for their furs than the Montrealers could afford to pay. The only way in which the latter could overcome this handicap was to get in between the company and the Indians who supplied the furs. The Indians were willing to take the lower Canadian price, either because they did not know that they could get a better price lower down, or because they wanted to be saved the long and difficult journey.

Thus the Montrealers had to push ahead of the company, and the company would naturally strive to keep up with them. They were preparing for a race across the continent. The race, however, could not begin until the Montrealers had girded up their loins. How they did this, we shall now see.

## CHAPTER VIII

### *The Montréalers gird up their Loins.*

In this wild scramble for furs, the Montrealers were fighting one another as well as the Hudson's Bay Company. Each man was for himself. Now this may be all right in ordinary communities where there is a government, but it was not all right out here where there was really no government. The Hudson's Bay Company by its charter had the right to govern part of the country, but nobody paid any attention to this right except the employees of the company. The traders from Canada did just what they pleased. There were no customs, laws, or authority of any kind to keep them in order, and every man went about armed. When they quarrelled, their guns went off almost by themselves.

To make matters worse these men were dealing with the Indians all the time. The traders came for furs, and they wanted to get these furs as cheaply as possible. Some men dealt honestly; others did not. There was nothing to prevent those who so wished from cheating the natives. There was nothing to stop them from making the Indians drunk that they might get their furs more easily. If the Indians found them out, they could move on to another part of the country. They were teaching the Indians bad morals, and the Indians were not stupid pupils.

And worst of all, the traders used the Indians in their white men's quarrels. When one trader found a rich fur territory, he was always afraid that another trader might break into it and steal his trade. When another did come along, he wanted to drive him out. What could he do? He had not only his own

gun and the guns of the few men whom he might have in his employ, but he had also the Indians with whom he was trading. He could turn the Indians against the rival trader. That was easily done with poisonous lies and equally poisonous rum. These white men were playing with fire.

In the spring of 1780, up at the Eagle Hills Fort, just below North Battleford, a number of traders and their men had a



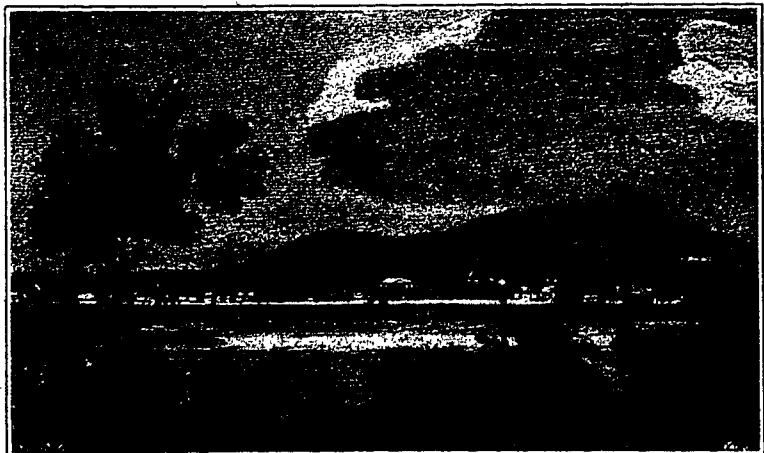
Trading with the Indians.

wild drinking party. As usual, there were several Indians around, and the red man imitated the white man. One Indian became very troublesome, demanding more and more liquor, until a trader, losing all patience with him, gave him some laudanum. One gulp quenched his thirst and extinguished his life. A fight followed, and soon the only white men left at the fort were dead ones. The rest had fled, saving their lives but losing their goods.

This is a terrible illustration of what was happening in various parts of the country. Evil traders were corrupting the Indians. Crime and anarchy were making lives and property unsafe. During the year of the Eagle Hills massacre, Indians attacked several trading posts, and many men were killed. A bloody storm was brewing, and there might have been a terrible slaughter in 1781, if the small-pox had not broken out and run like wild-fire through the whole of the red population.

If these conditions continued, the Montreal traders would certainly ruin both themselves and the country. If they went

on fighting one another, there would soon be nothing to fight for, and no men left to fight. What was needed was some form of organization. They must pull together. But how could they get together in a country of such tremendous size? And if they did get together, how could these men who had been cutting one another's throats agree to pull together. It would seem impossible, but it was done. To see how it was



The city of Montreal as it appeared in 1803.

done, we must look to the East and examine the way that the fur business was handled there.

A trader could leave Montreal in the spring and be back in the fall with a load of furs, if he went only to the country around the Great Lakes where the bulk of the Canadian trade still lay. If he went to the North-West he could not be back until a year later. Therefore, the money invested in an outfit to the North-West took twice as long to return in the shape of furs as did the money invested in an outfit to the nearer country. This meant that twice as much capital was needed for trading to the

farther country. Many had enough capital of their own to go to Detroit or Michilimackinac, but very few had enough to outfit themselves for the North-West. This difference had two important results which helped to solve the difficult problem of the West.

One result was that the North-West trade was largely under the control of a number of Montreal merchants who could supply the capital. Some of these were successful traders, such as Benjamin Frobisher and Alexander Henry. There were a few French Canadians, but most of them were Scots. Sometimes they hired the traders and their crews, and stocked the canoes with the necessary goods for trade and supplies for the support of the party. Sometimes they formed a sort of partnership with the traders, lending them the necessary money and merchandise.

The second result followed from the first. There were two groups of men, the traders and the merchants, and they had to come together regularly to arrange their business. They could do this every year only by meeting half way, because the distance was so great. Therefore, for a few weeks around the first of July, they met at Grand Portage.

This was the one place and the one time when they could all get together, and here was a small group of leaders—the moneyed merchants of Montreal. They were shrewd business men, and they soon saw that they would “kill the goose that laid the golden egg” unless they co-operated to keep it alive. The success which followed the pooling of stocks on Cumberland Lake in 1778 helped them to this conclusion. The results of that venture were reported at Grand Portage in the summer of 1779, and immediately nine of the principal Montreal firms agreed to combine for the next season. They continued the arrangement until 1782. Then the quantity of furs from the West dropped off heavily. This was caused by the smallpox, which killed many Indians and drove others from the hunt.

but the merchants feared that it was partly due to the lack of competition. Therefore, the agreement was dropped for a while.

They were soon brought back to it by something that they were not expecting. When Britain recognized the independence of the Thirteen Colonies in 1783, she agreed to the boundary which runs up through the Great Lakes. This frightened the Montreal merchants, for it cut off the territory which supplied most of their furs. They saw that only the North-West trade would be left, and even that was threatened, for Grand Portage lay on the American side of the line. At once they pulled together to protect themselves. In the spring of 1784, they sent two of their number, Benjamin Frobisher and Simon McTavish, up to Grand Portage. They carried an agreement which had been prepared in Montreal, and they persuaded the traders to sign it. Thus was formed the North West Company, one of the first fruits of the American Revolution.

The appearance of the North West Company made a great change in the West. Instead of a number of small traders wasting their energies in fighting one another, there was now one strong organization that could devote all its attention to outwitting its rival, the Hudson's Bay Company. The Montrealers had girded up their loins.

All was ready for the race to start. But before we begin to follow it, we should look at these two great companies to see which had the better chance of winning. There were really great differences between them:

We have already seen that the English company could afford to pay more for its furs, and, therefore, the Canadians simply must get ahead if they were to secure any trade at all. There were two other important differences. One was in the kind of men whom they employed; the other was in the encouragement that they gave to them. The men of "The Bay" came chiefly from the Orkney Islands, which the company's ships passed on

their way out from London. These Orcadians, as they are called, were hard workers and very reliable servants. The Nor'westers, the name applied to the men of the Canadian company, were of a very different stamp. All the North West Company's canoes were manned by French Canadian voyageurs. These men inherited the wild spirit of the old *coureurs de bois* and their remarkable knowledge of how to deal with the Indians. Secondly, the men of "The Bay" had less incentive. They were only employees who would remain employees always. The profits all went to a number of wealthy people in England. The Nor'westers, on the other hand, were spurred on by ambition. By a few years of successful work, a trader could win a partnership in the North West Company and a share in its profits. For these three reasons, the Canadian company had a fiery energy which its English rival lacked. Therefore, we shall not be surprised to find it leading in the race.



## CHAPTER IX

### *A Continental Marathon.*

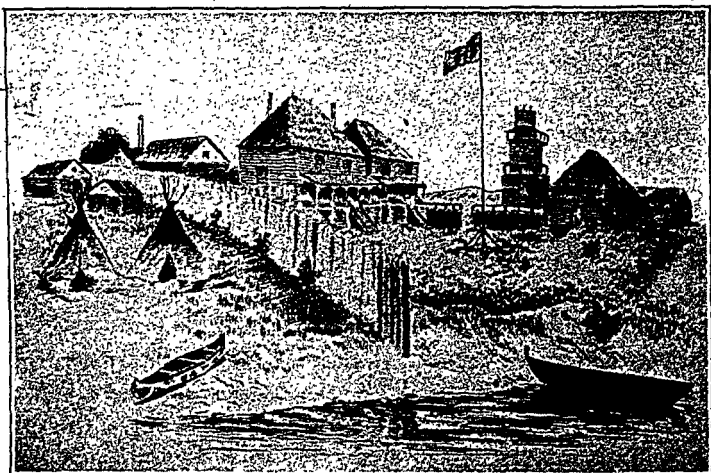
The race between the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company ran out in all directions, and in ten years or so the whole country was dotted with trading posts. The chief interest, however, lay in three areas, the valley of the Assiniboine, the valley of the Saskatchewan, and the Athabaska country,—as these were the parts where the most furs were to be found.

At first, the Nor'westers had all the Assiniboine territory to themselves. By 1787, they had a post up on the Qu'Appelle, where Fort Qu'Appelle now stands. To break into this country, the Hudson's Bay Company built a fort at Swan River in 1790, and four years later erected Brandon House, just seventeen miles below the present city of Brandon. This seems rather slow, but the old company was really very smart. The Nor'westers came all the way by canoe, and the men from the bay took advantage of this. By introducing pack horses and cutting across country over the Swan River route, they could beat their rivals by one month every spring and thus pick off the best of the trade.

Up the Saskatchewan, both paid more attention to the northern than to the southern branch, because it ran through better fur country. In 1787, the men from "The Bay" built Manchester House on the Northern Saskatchewan just a few miles down stream from the eastern border of the present province of Alberta. In 1795, they erected Edmonton House about twenty miles east of the present city of that name. A few years later they established Carlton House as a half-way

station between this and Cumberland House. At the same time the men of the North West Company were busy planting posts along the Saskatchewan. Their Fort Augustus appeared beside Edmonton House in 1796, and they also had their own Cumberland House near their rivals' fort, but when they built it we do not know.

In the Athabaska country, the Nor'westers were far ahead. Their Fort Chipewyan appeared on the south of Lake



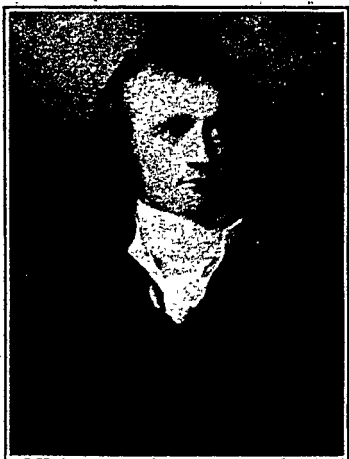
Fort Chipewyan.

Athabaska in 1788, where it remained for thirty years until a better location on the north side was found. They also pressed far beyond Lake Athabaska, out along the Peace River and up to Great Slave Lake where Forts Resolution and Providence sprang up about the same time as Fort Chipewyan to the south. During these years, the Hudson's Bay Company got no farther than Ile à la Crosse Lake, where it erected an establishment in 1791. Perhaps the men of "The Bay" hesitated to go outside the territory granted them by the charter, that is, the land that was drained into Hudson Bay.

They could not claim this Athabaska country, for the reason that it was drained into the Arctic.

These are but a few of the many posts that were sprinkled all over the North-West during these years. It is impossible to trace them all, for many of them were short-lived. Some were killed by an opposition fort that captured all the trade. Some died when all the beaver in the neighbourhood were killed. Some were abandoned because a better location was found. Often the name was moved on with the fort, so that the same name appeared in several different places. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Canadian company had about seventy posts and nearly a thousand men in the North-West. The English company had considerably less.

In the midst of this race a number of great explorers appeared. The most famous was Alexander Mackenzie. Born about the time that Canada became British, this young Highlander migrated to Montreal and entered the fur business during the American Revolutionary War. At the end of eight years, he was placed in charge of the North West Company's trade in the Athabaska region. He was very successful in the fur trade, but this was not his greatest interest.

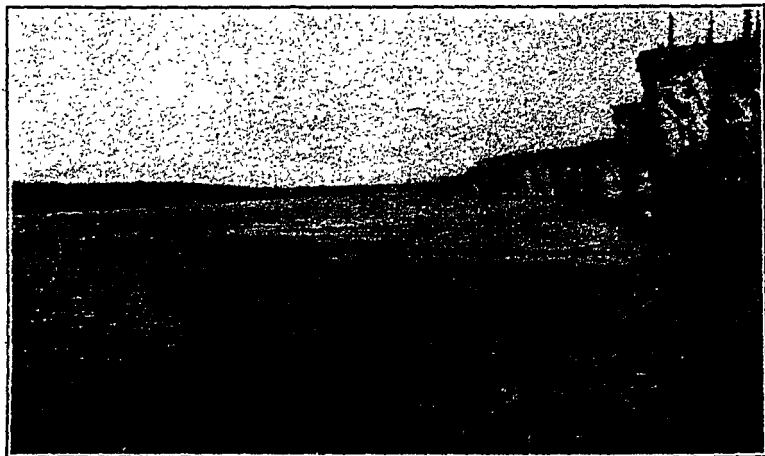


Sir Alexander Mackenzie.

Where did the great waters of the Athabaska and the Peace Rivers come from, and whither did they flow? Hearne's expedition was a challenge to Mackenzie. The little Coppermine River could not carry all these waters away. He could see that there must be another, a much mightier stream, and from the Indians

he heard that there was just such a river somewhere in the North. He determined to find it and follow it to the sea. He had the men and the time to do it. As soon as he sent off the annual flotilla of fur canoes in the spring, he was free to travel during the summer months.

On June 3rd, 1789, Mackenzie left Fort Chipewyan with three canoes manned by French Canadian voyageurs and some Indians. Crossing the western end of Lake Athabaska, they



The ramparts, Lower Mackenzie River.

paddled down the Slave River past the mouth of the mighty Peace and on to Great Slave Lake. The ice on the lake was so bad that they were nearly a fortnight reaching the northern shore. Now they were on the edge of the unknown. The Indians whom they met could tell them little that was of any value. Feeling their way along, they reached the western end of the lake in the latter part of June. Then, rounding an island, they came at once upon the entrance to a great river.

Down the current of this river they sped. Again and again they had to portage past rapids. The Indians were alarmed

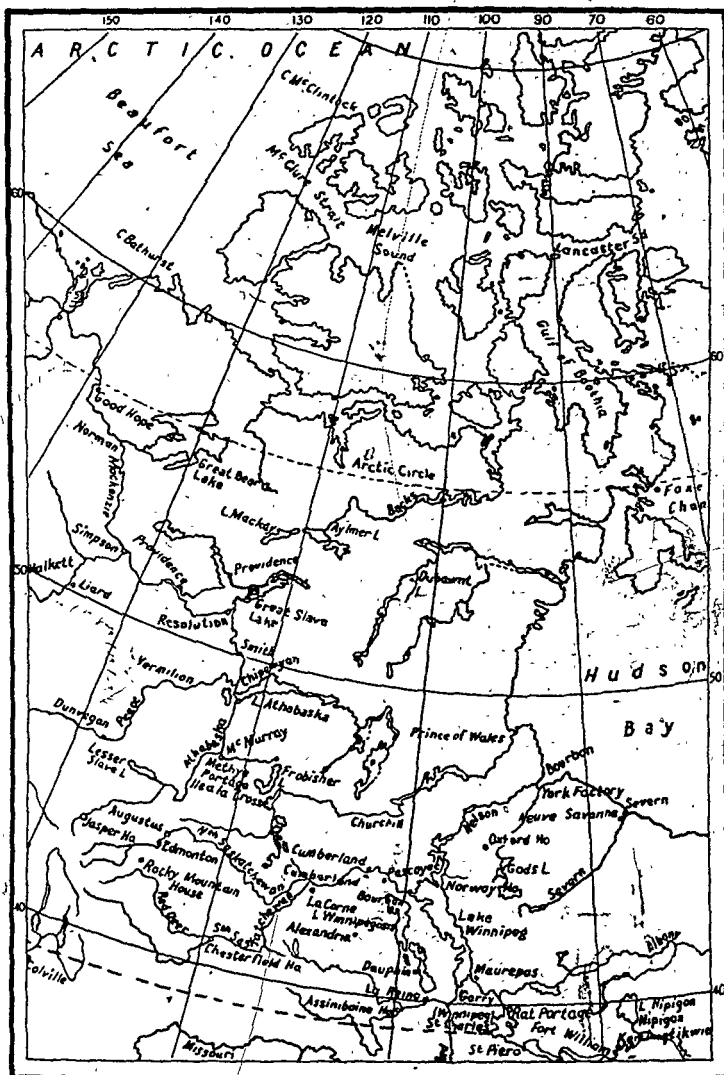
lest the strange waters hurl them over a cataract or carry them down to their deadly foes, the Eskimos. They might have deserted him as their fellows had deserted Hearne, if Mackenzie had not been such an imperious master, and if his French Canadians had not stuck to him so loyally.

Early in July, they came in sight of the Rocky Mountains, whose peaks were lost in the clouds. One hundred and fifty miles below the mouth of the Great Bear River, the banks closed in to within five hundred yards, and for nearly four miles the mighty stream flowed between limestone cliffs which grew higher and higher as the travellers swept along, until at last they stood up two hundred and fifty feet. This wonderful passage is now appropriately known as Mackenzie's Ramparts.

After a few miles, they crossed the Arctic Circle, and the explorer sat up all one night to watch the sun. At half-past twelve, he called one of his men to see the strange sight. The man was surprised to see the sun so high and thought that it was time to strike camp. At once he began to rouse his companions. Great was their astonishment to learn the hour and to hear that the sun had not sunk lower that night.

On July 12th, the stream widened into what appeared to be a lake all covered with ice. That night, Mackenzie wrote, "Some of the people were obliged to rise and remove the baggage on account of the rising of the water," but he thought that the wind had caused this. The next morning, he was wakened by a shout from one of his men who saw a lot of strange animals in the water. They were small white whales, some of them as big as a canoe. At four o'clock on the following morning, the water had again flowed under the baggage. This was now clearly the tide, because the wind had not changed.

Strange as it may seem, Mackenzie apparently did not realize where he was—at the mouth of the river and on the shores of the Arctic Ocean. The tide often comes up rivers for many miles and could not whales do the same? Mackenzie



Early western exploration.

actually wanted to press on to the north, but ice and fog blocked the way, and his time was now spent. His return journey upstream was bound to take longer, and he had to hurry back before the short season closed in upon him. On his way back, a few miles above Great Bear River, he noticed something that had escaped him on the way down. The bank of the river was burning. Some seams of coal had somehow caught fire and have continued to burn to this day. On September 12th, he was once more within the walls of Fort Chipewyan.

This journey was one of the most remarkable ever completed by any man. Mackenzie had covered three thousand miles in one hundred and two days. He was the first to reach the Arctic Ocean travelling overland. He had discovered one of the greatest rivers in the world, and, because he discovered it, the river has been named after him—the Mackenzie River.

While on his Arctic trip, Mackenzie began to dream of pushing over the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific coast, but he also felt his defects as an exact explorer. Which would he do, abandon the vision or prepare himself to realize it? For a man like Mackenzie there was no choice. In 1791, he travelled all the way to England, to spend the winter in London improving his scientific knowledge and securing the best instruments. In the spring, he returned to Canada and hurried up to his post on Lake Athabasca.

Fearing that the journey to the Pacific would be too long to accomplish in one season, he sent an advance party up the Peace River to prepare a fort for his winter quarters and as a new centre for trade. He left Fort Chipewyan on October 10th, and three weeks later reached his winter halting place. The ruins of this fort were found by Judge Howay in the summer of 1927 on the right bank of the Peace about eleven miles south-west of the present Peace River Crossing. In the spring, Mackenzie performed his duty towards the company

by sending six canoe loads of furs back to Fort Chipewyan. Then he followed his own great purpose.

On May 9th, 1793, he embarked in a twenty-five-foot canoe, which was built especially strong and light for this adventurous trip. He took with him a fellow Scot, Alexander Mackay, and six French Canadians, two of whom had accompanied him to the Arctic. Travelling straight west, they reached the forks

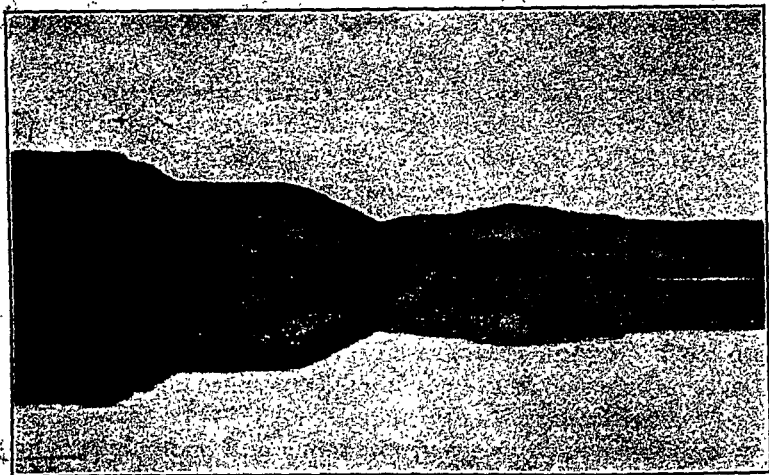


Photo by Prof. A. E. Cameron.

Peace River, near Peace River Crossing.

where the Finlay and the Parsnip Rivers join to form the Peace. Then, on the advice of an old Indian, they struck up the Parsnip in a south-easterly direction until they reached its upper stretches. There they found and followed a well-marked Indian portage to a stream which flowed into the Fraser.

Down the Fraser they went, crossing the present line of the Canadian National Railway to Prince Rupert close to the site of Fort George, until they were stopped by the warnings of some natives whom they encountered. These natives told of dangerous Indians and deadly rapids below. Retracing their



steps for a few miles, the explorers turned west and continued up the Blackwater River as far as they could paddle. Then, on July 4th, they cached their canoe, and each man shouldered his ninety pounds to plod overland along an Indian trail until they reached the Bella Coola River, where they obtained canoes from friendly natives. In three days, Mackenzie found himself at the mouth of the river on salt water.

He had reached the goal of which La Vérendrye had dreamed, and there in vermilion mixed with melted grease he inscribed on the face of the rock: "Alexander Mackenzie, from Canada, by land, the twenty-second of July, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-three. Lat.  $52^{\circ} 20' 48''$  N." On August 24th, he was back in his fort on the Peace River. He was the first white man to cross the continent north of Mexico.

In this journey, Mackenzie found new fur fields in the Rocky Mountains region and the Pacific slope. But several years passed before his company tried to use them. This was due to a serious quarrel which split the North

West Company in 1795. Because they hated Simon McTavish, the autocratic chief of the company, several partners withdrew to conduct a separate business. Three years later, there was a general shake-up in the North West Company, and several more dropped out. The whole opposition to the old company realized that they might not succeed if they competed against each other, and therefore formed a new organization called the XY Company. How did it get such a curious name?



Simon McTavish.

Throughout the North-West trade, all goods had to be done up in fairly uniform packages or bales of about ninety pounds for fitting in the canoes and carrying over portages, and these were marked HB, if they belonged to the Hudson's Bay Company, or NW, if they belonged to the North-West Company. Wanting a similar label that no one could misunderstand, and wanting it right away, the new company simply took the next two letters of the alphabet and used them for their purposes.

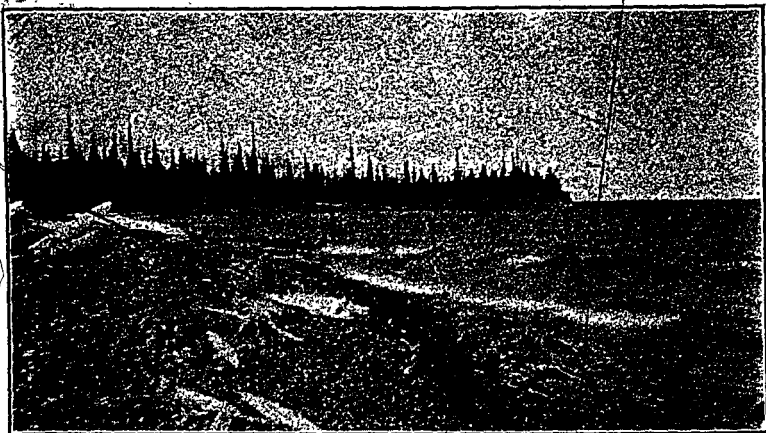


Photo by Prof. A. E. Cameron.  
The "Little Red Rocks," on the north shore of Great Slave Lake just west of North Arm. Mackenzie passed around this point and may have camped upon it.

In 1799, Alexander Mackenzie also broke with McTavish, but he did not join the XY Company immediately. He went to England, where he won fame and a knighthood by publishing in 1801 a book on his explorations. Then he returned to be the leader of the XY Company.

Now there were three companies fighting for the furs of the Indians, and the struggle was more bitter than ever. As soon as it was formed, the XY Company began to plant forts everywhere, and many places now had three forts where two had been too many. The Hudson's Bay Company had always

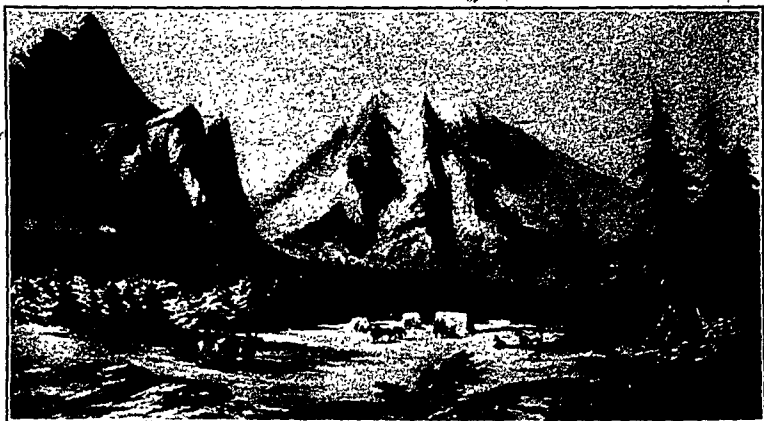
tried to keep liquor from the Indians, and the North West Company had done the same. But now the latter threw discretion to the winds and poured out firewater to the natives. The XY Company did the same. They both began it. The wild result is easy to imagine. Blood flowed with the liquor.

There were many reports like the following of a Nor'wester at Pembina: "Indians daily coming in by small parties; nearly a hundred men here. I gave them fifteen kegs of mixed liquor, and the XY gave in proportion; all drinking; I quarrelled with Little Shell, and dragged him out of the fort by the hair. Indians very troublesome, threatening to level my fort to the ground, and their chief making mischief. I had two narrow escapes from being stabbed by him."

One incident up in the Athabaska country reveals the trade methods that were all too common in these delirious years. Two Indians arrived at the posts of the rival Canadian companies in the winter of 1801-1802, saying that their band had a collection of furs in their camp some days' travel distant. King, a Nor'wester, and Lamotte, an XY Company agent, at once raced for the prize and arrived at the same time. Because he had a stronger force with him, King got all the packs but one, which Lamotte managed to secure. Determined to get that too, King went to Lamotte's tent with a party of armed men. Lamotte told him to let the pack alone or he would shoot him. King paid no attention, and was about to carry it off when Lamotte shot him dead. King's men were preparing to do the same to Lamotte, but the interference of the Indians saved the life of the white man.

Until 1804, the lives of men seemed cheaper than the skins of dead animals. Then a peaceful death in Montreal saved many violent ones in the North-West. The only good thing which Simon McTavish ever did to his rivals was to die. At once the mortal feud was stilled, and the two companies were merged under the old name.

During these years of violence and crime, exploration was not entirely forgotten. Mackenzie's discoveries stirred the Hudson's Bay Company to send out surveying expeditions around the Nelson and Churchill Rivers, up the Saskatchewan, and even as far as Lake Athabaska. But soon the company stopped this work. Because it could afford to pay more for furs than its rivals, it did not feel the same necessity for pushing out vigorously. This laziness lost to the English company the services of one of the best men that it ever had.



The old Athabaska trail. From a water colour by Captain Warre.

David Thompson was an orphan boy of fourteen when he was taken from school in London, apprenticed to the Hudson's Bay Company, and shipped to the mouth of the Churchill River in 1784. After some years in the service of the company, he became expert as a surveyor and determined to be a great inland explorer. When the company stopped its surveys, he refused to become a mere trader. In May, 1797, he turned his back on the Hudson's Bay Company and tramped seventy miles to the nearest establishment of the Nor'westers to offer his services to the rival company. He was encouraged to go

on to Grand Portage, where he met the general assembly of merchants and traders.

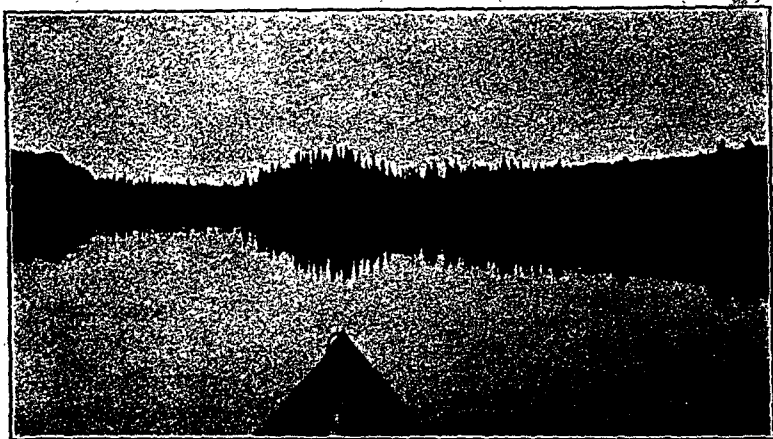
Never was a man more welcome. The Nor'westers wanted him in the very worst way, because they were in great difficulties, and he could help them out. Although Britain in 1783 had agreed to a boundary that cut off much of the Canadian fur territory, she hung on to this territory until 1796. What the merchants had feared in 1783 was now come to pass. Grand Portage was on American soil, and so also were many of their trading posts. They were bound to lose all of these, but how many of them there were they did not know. Nor could they tell until the boundary was drawn, and an accurate survey was made to show what forts lay south of the line. The forty-ninth parallel of latitude did not become the boundary west of the Lake of the Woods until 1818, but already men felt that it would be. Here was the man to settle the whole question, so far as any one could settle it then!

Eagerly the Nor'westers accepted Thompson's offer. They appointed him their astronomer and surveyor, and instructed him to survey the forty-ninth parallel and to find the exact location of all their establishments. For some years now Thompson was happy, and his instruments were busy gathering material for the first accurate map of the country. This, of course, took him out to the foothills. In 1800 and 1801 he was in Rocky Mountain House, which had just been built on the North Saskatchewan one mile above the mouth of the Clearwater River. From there he made three trips to the mountains, and he was anxious to push beyond. But the company ordered him elsewhere to help in the fight against its two rivals, and he had to wait until the war was over before he could follow his dream.

The union of the two Canadian companies in 1804 came just in time. In the next year, Lewis and Clark explored all the way from the Missouri to the mouth of the Columbia for the

United States government; John Jacob Astor, the fur king of New York, was trying to establish his company on the Pacific coast; and the Russians were coming down from Alaska. There were even rumours that the Hudson's Bay Company had determined to break across the mountains into new fur territory.

But the presence of the Americans and the Russians was not the cause of the Canadian company pushing its trade over the Rockies. The union of 1804 did this by putting Sir Alexander



—Photo by Prof. A. E. Cameron.  
The Clearwater below Methye Portage.

Mackenzie at the head of the North West Company. He had long been determined to take this great step. Now it became possible. In 1805, the company decided to send two expeditions across the mountain barrier by the only routes on British territory that were then known. Simon Fraser was to cross from the Peace River, and David Thompson from the Saskatchewan.

As Thompson was up in the region of the Churchill River and did not return until 1806, he was not able to proceed up the Saskatchewan route until after Fraser had crossed the moun-

tains and had begun to plant trading posts along the river which Mackenzie had found. Like Mackenzie, Fraser supposed it to be the Columbia.

In the spring of 1807, Fraser received instructions to follow the river down to its mouth, taking possession of the country. The company hoped that he might get ahead of Lewis and Clark, for the news of what they had done did not arrive until after these orders were sent. With feverish haste, Fraser and his men dashed down the stream which more than once nearly hurled them into eternity as it plunged, a mad torrent, through rocky gorges. The Indians warned them that no canoe could live in the boiling waters, but facing perils, was the delight of such dare-devils as Fraser and his French Canadian voyageurs. Fraser was determined to rush to his goal, the mouth of the Columbia, as fast as he could.



Simon Fraser.

In the beginning of July, they came to a point where the tide rose and fell, but they did not cast eyes on the sea. Their supplies were now so low and the natives were so hostile that further progress seemed like suicide. Anyway, they felt certain that they had virtually reached their goal. Before turning back, however, Fraser took out his instruments. He knew that the latitude of the mouth of the Columbia was  $46^{\circ} 20'$ , but he wanted to be sure where he was. To his astonishment, he found that he was somewhere about the forty-ninth parallel. He had missed his goal, but he had found another—the great river that has been named after him—the Fraser River.

About the time that Fraser received his instructions, Thompson left Rocky Mountain House and crossed over Howse Pass, which Duncan McGillivray had discovered in 1800, to a tributary of the Columbia. Up this he paddled to what is now called Windermere Lake. About a mile below it, he built a trading post, called Kootanae House, and there he



—Courtesy of Mr. J. B. Tyrrell.

The ruins of Rocky Mountain House, the western outpost of the North West Company, on the banks of the Saskatchewan River, Alberta.

spent the winter trading with the Indians. In the spring, he continued south to South Columbia Lake. He had no suspicion that this was the source of the Columbia, because the waters up which he had come flowed north-west. From the lake, he spied another river flowing in the opposite direction, now known as the Kootenay. After a short portage, he and his men embarked upon this more promising stream, not dreaming that it was a tributary of the very one that they had left behind. They



followed this as far as Kootenay Lake and then returned with more furs to the fort.

Thompson now went east to deliver the fruits of his winter's trading. It must be remembered that, just as in the days of La Vérendrye, exploration was the hand-maid of trade. Thompson could not leap to the Pacific; his business was to plant trading posts and to survey the country in which they lay. Therefore, over four years elapsed between his first arrival on the banks of the Columbia and his reaching the mouth in July, 1811. During this time he explored every foot of the eleven hundred odd miles through which the river flows.

On the prairie, Thompson is still remembered as the discoverer of the Athabaska Pass which, for more than half a century, was to be the main western gateway to this country. Immediately after he had discovered this route in 1811, his company planted a post close to the site of the present town of Jasper. The Hudson's Bay Company checkmated this move in 1813 by building Jasper House, so called after Jasper Hawse, who was the first clerk to take charge of it. The fort was at the northern end of Brulé Lake until about 1836, when it was moved up into the mountains.

Thompson, however, did much more for Canada than to discover Athabaska Pass. Along with Fraser, he established a British company on the Pacific coast, and it was so efficient and energetic that it kept the Americans and the Russians apart. Thus was British Columbia saved for Canada and the Empire. The continental marathon was over.

## CHAPTER X

*Who the first White Population were and how they lived.*

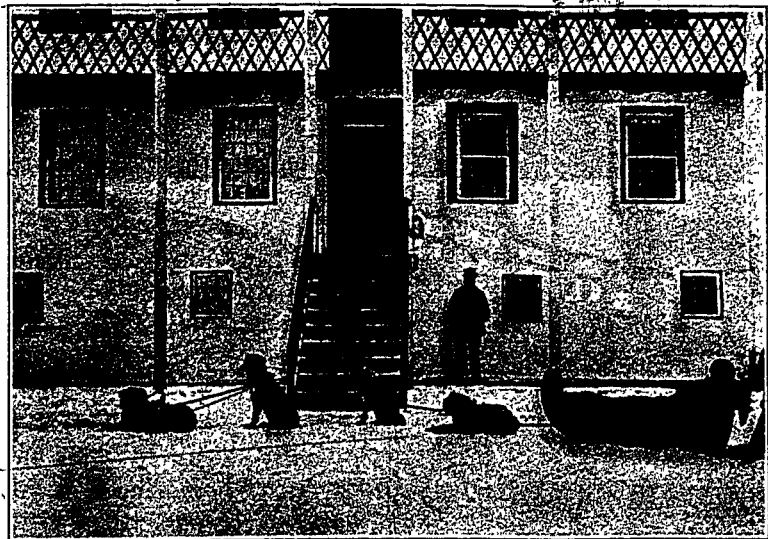
During these years of growing strife, the two great companies must have had between fifteen hundred and two thousand white men permanently in the North-West. These were the first white population of the country. Those who arrived in Hudson's Bay Company vessels were usually bound to a period of continuous service and could not hope to return for years. They travelled up and down the country between the "factories" on the bay and the inland posts. The employees of the North-West Company were similarly apprenticed or engaged and seldom went farther east than Grand Portage or Fort William. Some of them went no farther than Rainy Lake. They were proud of being known as "winterers," and looked down upon the several hundred men who carried the goods between Montreal and Lake Superior as mere trash.

Those in charge of the English company's operations were first known as governors and later as factors. Under them were chief-traders, traders, clerks, and apprentices. The highest rank in the Canadian company was that of partner or bourgeois. Some of the partners lived in Montreal and looked after the eastern end of the business; others remained in the West and were responsible for the various trading districts. Next came the clerks and traders, from whose ranks the partners were recruited. Each fort was usually commanded by a trader. Finally, there was an army of guides and canoe men.

Somewhat more than half of this population—all the canoe men and some of the traders of the North West Company—was solidly French. Of this we have constant reminders to-day.

Not only is there a distinct French population in various parts of the West, but also the country is sprinkled with French place names, and many words in common use, such as *prairie*, *portage*, and *cache*, are French.

The smaller half of the population spoke English as their native tongue, though only a minority claimed England as

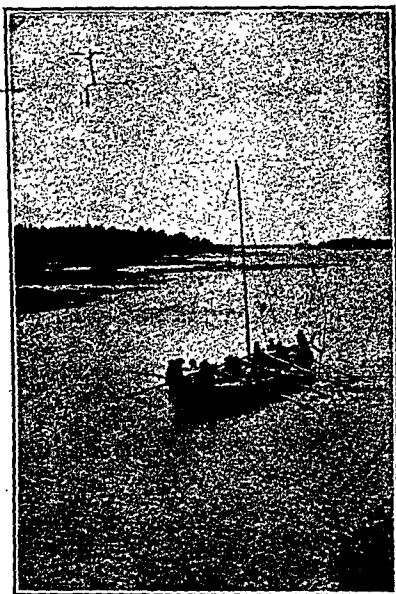


A dog cariole at Edmonton.

their native land. Scots predominated in both companies. Everyone knows what is supposed to happen "when Greek meets Greek," and this happened for more than a generation in the North-West where Scot met Scot.

Because they were engaged in a continental Marathon, the means of travel became and remained all-important to the rivals. We have seen the Hudson's Bay Company introducing pack horses for quick transportation over the Swan River route to reach the Assiniboine before the Canadians could arrive

from Grand Portage. But this was unusual. Until well on in the nineteenth century, there was little travel with freight by land, except in winter, when sledges drawn by dog-teams were used. The load varied with the number of dogs in the train, but averaged one hundred and fifty pounds for each dog. A man with experience could drive a train seventy



A York boat.

miles a day. Though it is hardly believable, a driver once made that distance without a stop for rest or food.

The great highways of the West were the rivers. The sledges sped over their frozen surface in winter; in summer their waters carried a still heavier traffic. The famous craft of the Hudson's Bay Company was the York boat. It was a big, clumsy boat, equipped with mast and sail, manned by rowers standing on either side, and steered by a tree or pole attached as a rudder. But this did not become

common until after the North West Company disappeared in 1821. So long as the two companies were racing for the trade of the country, they wanted to go as fast as possible, and, therefore, they used only canoes. Because they inherited the French tradition, the Nor'westers generally had better canoes. A military officer who travelled with the North West Company has left a full description of those which were used between Montreal and the end of the route on Lake Superior.

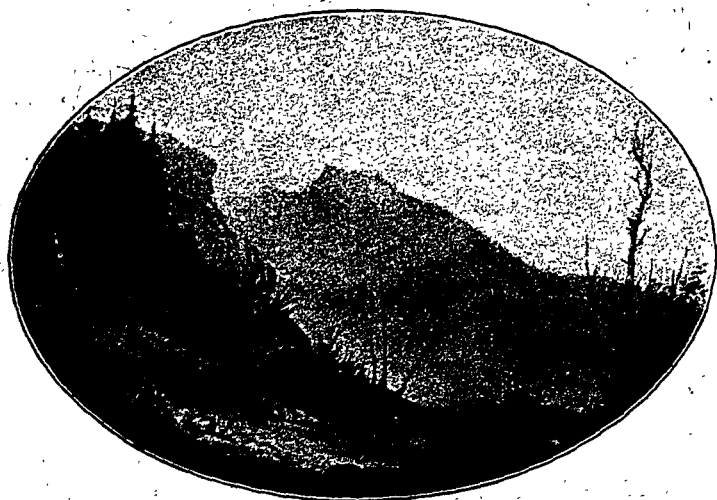
"These canoes were exceedingly strong and capacious, they were about thirty-six feet in length, by six feet wide, near the middle; and although the birch-bark which formed a thin external coating over their ribs—of white cedar, and their longitudinal laths of the same wood, appeared to compose but a flimsy vessel, yet they usually carried a weight of five tons. It may be as well to state that this cargo was very carefully stored, in order to remove any unequal pressure, which would have been fatal to such a vessel. Four poles, three or four inches at their thickest ends . . . were laid side by side in the middle of the bottom of the canoe. On these poles, the cargo was carefully arranged so that all the weight rested on them, and none allowed to press against the bare and unprotected sides of the canoe. Every package was made up of the weight of ninety pounds and none heavier.

"The five tons included the provisions for ten men, sufficient to support them during about twenty to twenty-two days. Each canoe was provided with a mast and lug-sail, and also each man had a ten-foot setting pole, of good ash, shod with an iron ferrule at each end, for assisting the men towing with a strong line in ascending the rapids. The paddles were supplied by the canoe-men, each bringing his own. Each canoe had also a camp-kettle, provided by the owners, as also a few Hambro lines, a bundle of watap, roots of the pine tree, for stitching up any seam that might burst, a parcel of gum of a resinous nature, for paying over the seams when leaky, a piece of birch-bark for repairs, hatchet, crooked knife, and a few more indispensable articles."

The canoes used on all the waters west of Lake Superior were the same in type, but they were smaller in size. They carried about three thousand pounds of freight and a crew of four or five men.

"When arrived at a portage," says Peter Grant, a bourgeois of the company, "the bowman (commonly called the guide),

jumps in the water to prevent the canoe from touching the bottom, while the others tie their slings to the packages in the canoe and swing them on their backs to carry over the portage. (A strap or band, called a tumpline, over the voyageur's forehead bore most of the weight.) The bowman and the steersman carry their canoe, a duty from which the middle men are exempt. The whole is conducted with astonishing expedition, a necessary consequence of the enthusiasm which always



Making a portage. From a painting by Cornelius Kreighoff.

attends their long and perilous voyages . . . When they arrive at a rapid, the guide or foreman's business is to explore the waters previous to their running down with their canoes, and, according to the height of the water, they either lighten the canoe by taking out part of the cargo and carry it overland, or run down the whole load."

These French Canadians were wonderfully sturdy. Each carried two packs at once over a portage, and Alexander MacKenzie tells of one who carried seven packs for half a league.

"No men in the world," says the military officer already quoted, "are more severely worked than are these Canadian voyageurs. I have known them to work in a canoe twenty hours out of twenty-four, and go on at that rate during a fortnight or three weeks without a day of rest or a diminution of labour; but it is not with impunity they so exert themselves; they lose much flesh in the performance of such journeys, though the quantity of food they consume is incredible. They smoke almost



Rapids at the mouth of the Saskatchewan River.

incessantly, and sing peculiar songs, which are the same their fathers and grandfathers, and probably their great-grandfathers, sang before them; the time is about the same as that of our military quick marches, and is marked by the movements of their paddles. They rest from five to ten minutes every two hours when they refill their pipes: it is more common for them to describe distances by so many pipes, than in any other way . . . They are short-lived and rarely are fit to voyage after they have attained their fortieth year, and sixty years seems to be the average of their existence."

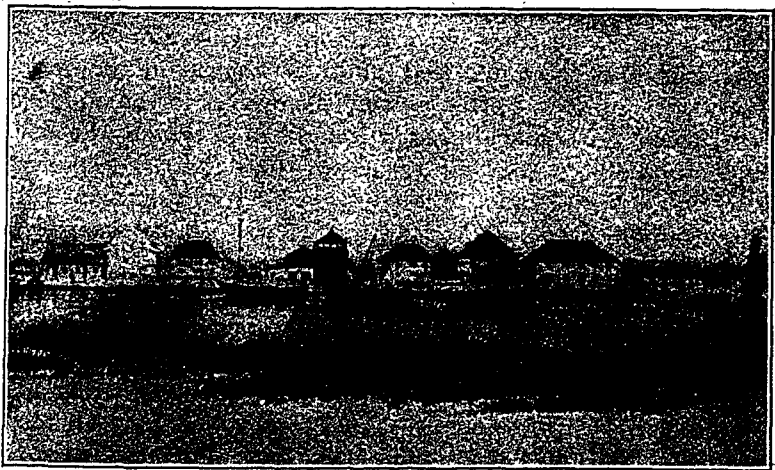
The forts which were scattered over the country differed greatly in size and shape. Only one was a real fortress. That was on Hudson Bay, Fort Prince of Wales, and was built of huge stones and furnished with great guns. It was a sort of Gibraltar in appearance but not in reality. In 1782, after France had entered the American Revolutionary War, one of her admirals, La Pérouse, entered the bay and summoned the governor of Fort Prince of Wales to surrender. The governor had a weak garrison and a weaker heart. This is rather surprising, for he was none other than Samuel Hearne, whose fortitude had carried him to the mouth of the Coppermine River. Soon his table-cloth was flying over the fort, and the French took possession of the place without having fired a shot. The powder which they saved they spent in trying to blow up the walls, and all that remained was a picturesque ruin.

Until a much later day, all the other forts were constructed of wood. The walls were upright tree-trunks, sometimes split, their lower ends buried in the ground and their upper ends held together by horizontal beams. They were loopholed, and sometimes they had a gallery for firing over the top. The better forts had projectionis, or bastions, at the corners and over the great gate to enable the garrison to shoot any enemy that came too close to be reached by the muskets from the ordinary loopholes. Some forts had walls between one and two hundred yards long, and within the walls they had a series of buildings and perhaps a garden.

The most elaborate post was on Lake Superior, where every year the men of the West met the men of the East. In 1800, a fort was built at the mouth of the Kaministiquia River. Three years afterwards, the headquarters were moved there from Grand Portage, which was then abandoned. In 1805, this new place was named Fort William, after William McGillivray, one of the principal men of the North West Company.



This was a veritable village. In the middle of a square stood a large building containing a hall. There the men of the company dined at different tables according to their rank. Other buildings served as sleeping quarters, offices, shops, and store-houses. The winterers camped outside the walls on the west side, and their lines were always clean and neat. The voyageurs, who came up from Montreal in the spring and



The village of Fort William on the shore of Lake Superior, the headquarters of the North West Company.

returned later in the summer, camped on the east of the fort, and their quarters were always dirty. At Fort William, there was a wealth of good things to eat and also to drink, which sometimes made their feasts long and noisy.

Fort William was a kind of ideal. Only a few posts of importance resembled it; those of lesser importance were much smaller and simpler. Some forts were merely thrown together as a temporary shelter for a year or two, while others were built for permanent occupation. All were not intended for trading in furs. Just as a navy must have stations where it can take

on coal or oil, these companies felt the need of supply stations for revictualling on long journeys. These stations collected and handed out food, principally pemmican, which was procured in trade from the natives. This was the standard article of diet over the whole country; no party ever set out to travel any distance without a stock of pemmican. It was cheap; it kept indefinitely; and it was concentrated food for man and beast.

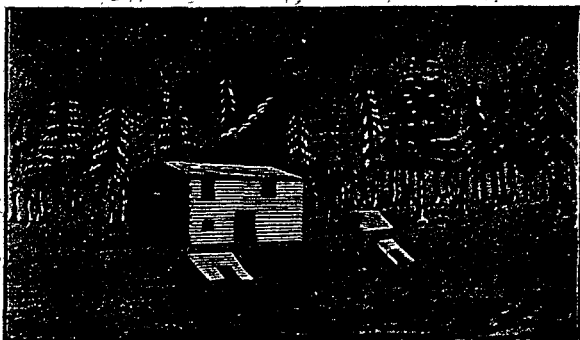
Most posts, however, had a more extensive menu than pemmican and the game that could be bagged in the neighbourhood. As soon as they settled themselves in the country, these early fur-traders planted vegetable seeds in the soil. Peter Pond sowed the first garden in the Athabaska country in 1779. When Daniel Williams Harmon was stationed at Dunvegan on the Peace River from 1808 to 1810, he was a very successful agriculturalist. From nine bushels of seed, he gathered over one hundred and fifty bushels of potatoes, and he reaped a harvest of barley which he described as "the finest that I have ever seen in any country."

The life of the men in these forts was sometimes exciting and sometimes very monotonous. Agriculture was only an incidental occupation. Their chief business, of course, was to collect furs. They examined and sorted the pelts brought in by the Indians, giving them in exchange little wooden tokens, each of which represented the value of one beaver skin. With these, the natives entered the store-room to make their purchases. After looking at all the attractive articles for sale, they spread their little pieces of wood on the counter and arranged them in piles. One heap might be for guns and ammunition, another for blankets, another for knives and hatchets, and another for beads and other finery. This was a slow business, as the squaws often had much to say about it. Sometimes the piles were pulled about a great deal before the Indians were sure of how they wanted to spend them. When

this was done, perhaps many times, the traders proceeded to fill the Indians' orders.

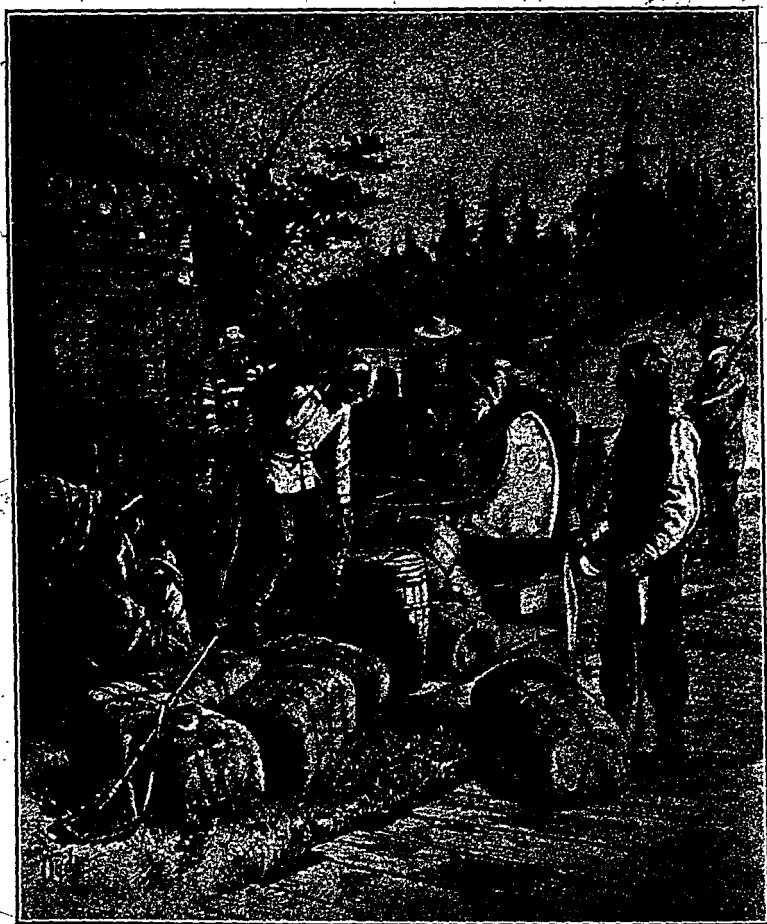
All the furs did not come in this way. Frequently the traders set out with a selection of goods to seek the Indians, and the actual trading was done in their camp. This involved trips that were often very trying and sometimes very dangerous. Hostile Indians might fall upon them, or a blizzard might overtake them, and blizzards were quite as bad then as they may be now.

Even before the days of competition, the Hudson's Bay Company introduced the principle of credit—giving to the



An early trading post.

Indians the goods that they wanted, particularly ammunition for the hunt, and receiving the Indians' promise to pay for them in furs after the winter's hunt was over. The Nor'westers, when they came along, did the same. This trading on credit opened the door for sharp practices. It was not unusual for the men of one company, often with the assistance of free liquor, to press their goods upon the Indians in exchange for the furs which they were bringing in to the other company to pay their debts. Thereupon, the men of the other company might try to gain by force what they had lost by fraud.



Hudson's Bay employees on their annual expedition.

Towards spring, the men in the forts turned over all the furs which had accumulated in the store-room or attic, and did them up in packs. They always put the best furs in the middle, lest they be spoiled on their way down country. Then the commander of the post, with a little company, set out on the long trek to the bay or to Lake Superior to deliver the packs, procure a new stock of supplies, and make up the accounts.

Such a life was very unlike the regular lives which most of us follow to-day. It rather resembled that of the savages, with its spells of great toil, privation, and danger alternating with blank spells when there was nothing to do. A few rare individuals employed their long leisure profitably. Some bold men, such as Alexander Mackenzie, went off exploring; others who were fond of reading pored over their books. Peter Fidler did both. This founder of the Hudson's Bay Company's establishment at Ile à la Crosse collected a library of five hundred volumes, some of which may still be seen in Winnipeg.

Most of the men, however, wasted their leisure in idleness—sleeping, story-telling, dancing, feasting, drinking, and sleeping again. Away off in the wilds, they only too commonly cast off the customs and restraints of civilized society. There were no white women; therefore, the great majority of the traders found Indian wives. The companies favoured these "country marriages," because they had a steadying influence upon the men, and they established connections with the natives which were useful in trade. As there were no clergymen to tie a knot, these marriages took the form of a bargain; following the native fashion. When a girl caught a trader's fancy, he presented her parents with goods that caught their fancy, and they presented him with his bride.

The wife discarded her native dress for the garb of civilization and deserted the camp for residence in the fort. The custom was for the men to leave their Indian wives behind when they withdrew from the country to live in civilization.

The "country wives," as they were called, were quite content with this arrangement, because a white husband was better than a red one. Moreover, all of them were not deserted. After living in the wilds for years, many men lost their taste for the cramping ways of civilization, and, therefore, when their days of service were done, they settled down in the neighbourhood of some fort.



John Norquay.

From the children of these mixed marriages — French, Scottish, and English half-breeds—the two companies recruited many of their servants. One of them rose to be governor of Fort Prince of Wales—Moses Norton, who sent Samuel Hearne on his famous journey; and another, John Norquay, was to become premier of Manitoba shortly after that province was formed. Most of them, however, lived very simple lives. They were hewers of

wood and drawers of water for the companies, or they subsisted by a combination of agriculture, hunting, and trapping. These people, who have since played a prominent part in the stirring history of the North-West, were called Métis, the French word for half-breed, because the majority were descended from Canadian voyageurs and spoke French as their native tongue.

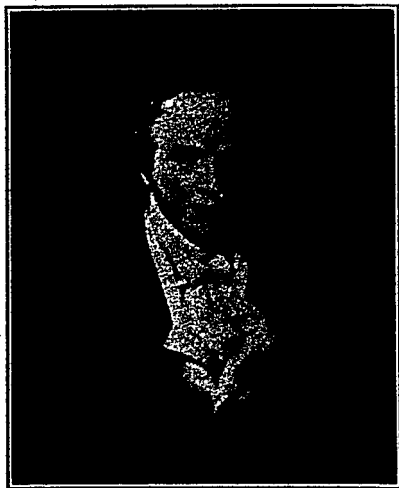
## CHAPTER XI

### *A Colony thrice planted and twice uprooted.*

The Hudson's Bay Company was the mother and the Earl of Selkirk was the father of Manitoba. As we shall see, the mother at first cared little, but the father cared everything for their offspring. The story of the beginnings of Manitoba is one of the most tragic in Canadian history.

Thomas Douglas, the fifth Earl of Selkirk, had a heart as large as his great Scottish estates. In the opening years of the nineteenth century, Highland landlords were so eager to go in for sheep farming that they turned swarms of poor peasants off the lands which they had cultivated. This stirred Selkirk's pity.

Many of these peasants migrated to the United States, and this roused his patriotism. He burned to see these British people settled on British soil beyond the seas, and he tried to persuade the government to undertake the task. But the government had little thought for innocent Scottish crofters so long as the terrible Napoleon ruled Europe and threatened Britain.



Lord Selkirk.

Therefore, this noble Scot went about the work himself, establishing three colonies, one in Prince Edward Island, one in Upper Canada, and one on the banks of the Red River. In the first, he did not have enough room; in the second, he found that the government was not very friendly; in the third, he hoped to have everything his own way.

The wide open spaces of the North-West attracted him. Here was an ideal place to work out his vision of combined patriotism and philanthropy. In order to get the necessary land from the Hudson's Bay Company, he had to become a powerful member of that company. Therefore, in 1808, he began to buy as much of its stock as he could afford. Within three years he succeeded in persuading the company to grant him 116,000 square miles covering a part of what is now Manitoba, North Dakota, and Minnesota. The deed was signed in May, 1811.

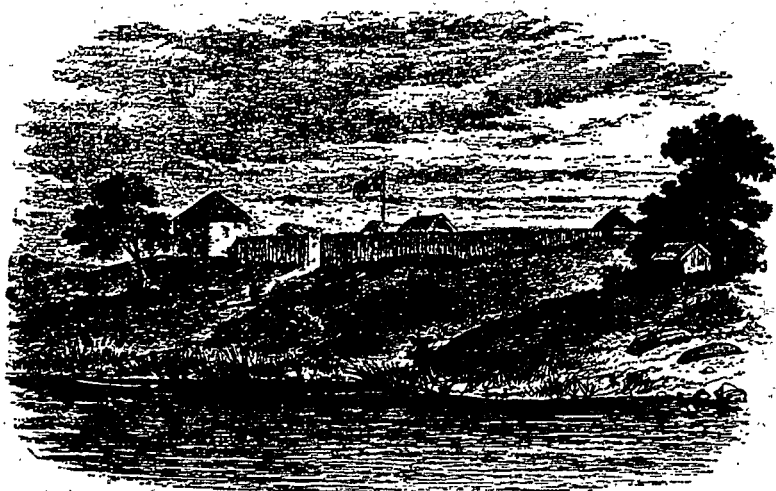
Why did the other members of the company agree to give him this district of Assiniboia, as it was called? They did it to save themselves and the company. They saw that Selkirk was determined to plant a colony in the North-West. If he could not do it himself, he would force the company to do it. They preferred him to do it, because whoever undertook the task would probably lose a great deal of money.

As soon as he had secured the land, Selkirk began sending out annual parties to build up the colony. The first sailed from Stornoway in the Hebrides in the summer of 1811. It was led by Miles Macdonell, a Glengarry Highlander from Upper Canada, who was to be the first governor. He and his colonists arrived at York Factory late in September, but they had to wait until the following summer before they could set out for "the Land of Promise." At the end of August, 1812, they reached the forks of the Red River, and there Macdonell took formal possession of the country. At the same time, he picked out a spot for the first settlement—a tongue of land



enclosed by a bend of the river a mile below the mouth of the Assiniboine. It is now in the city of Winnipeg and is known as Point Douglas.

Macdonell and most of the party did not remain here but pushed on to the mouth of the Pembina at the present American border, where they spent the winter in a camp which they called Fort Daer. They went there because they had to find



Fort Douglas. From a pencil sketch by Lord Selkirk.

food and could obtain it from the half-breeds settled in the vicinity. The latter caught quantities of fish in the rivers and hunted the buffalo, whose winter grazing-grounds were not far off. From Fort Daer, the colonists sent back provisions to the junction of the Red and the Assiniboine Rivers.

These provisions were to supply those whom they had left behind to break the ground and build houses, and also to feed a second party that arrived in October, having come all the way from Scotland that summer. In the spring of 1813, the men at Fort Daer went down the Red to the site of the

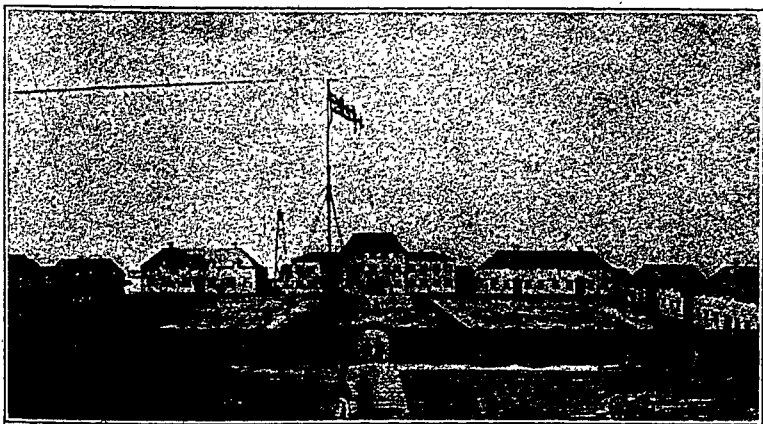
settlement. There all joined hands and worked with a will. They sowed crops and laid out permanent farms of one hundred acres each. These were in the form of long strips running back from the river, as the river was the main highroad. The rapid growth in the summer months inspired the settlers with great faith in the country, but the failure of their first crop, due to late seeding, damped their enthusiasm. Happy indeed would they have been had they met no other discouragement.

The servants of the Hudson Bay Company had been working against these pioneers from the moment of their landing. The fur trade has never agreed with settlement, and it was a bother to look after the newcomers. Moreover, Selkirk, as a powerful member of the company, had tried to tighten up loose business methods. The changes which he introduced meant that the men of the company would now have to work harder, and some of them would lose the chance of making a little money for themselves on the side. Therefore, the servants of the company disliked Selkirk himself and showed it in their unfriendly attitude towards his darling child, the colony.

When the first party arrived at York Factory, William Auld, who had charge of that place, refused to receive them there, and compelled them to spend the winter of 1811-1812 in their own camp some miles off. Miles Macdonell had expected that the men of the company would give him some recruits and would speed him on his way. He found the very opposite. The company's employees persuaded some of Macdonell's men to desert their leader and moved most of the others to mutiny against him. This delayed his departure from the mouth of the Nelson in 1812. Macdonell understood that the company would have a stock of supplies waiting for his party at the forks, but when he reached there, he wrote bitterly to Selkirk that the company's traders had "not one bag of pemmican or any other article of provision reserved for us." That was why

the colonists had to go up to the Pembina. These are but a few illustrations of how the colony, a child of the company, received a stone instead of bread.

But the neglect of the parent was nothing compared to the bitter hatred of the rival company. Selkirk did not know until after he had done it that he was putting his foot into a hornet's nest—the North West Company. The result was a great tragedy. A number of innocent people lost their lives, and



York Factory.

many suffered great hardships. The reason for this is to be found in the peculiar position of the North West Company.

The Nor'westers drew most of their wealth from the Athabaska country. They had as much right to that country as had the English company. The charter gave the Hudson's Bay Company only the lands that were drained into Hudson Bay. This territory was drained into the Arctic. But to reach it, the Nor'westers had to cross lands which were drained into Hudson Bay and which, therefore, legally belonged to their rival. If the Hudson's Bay Company had enforced its exclusive right to these lands, it would have strangled the North West

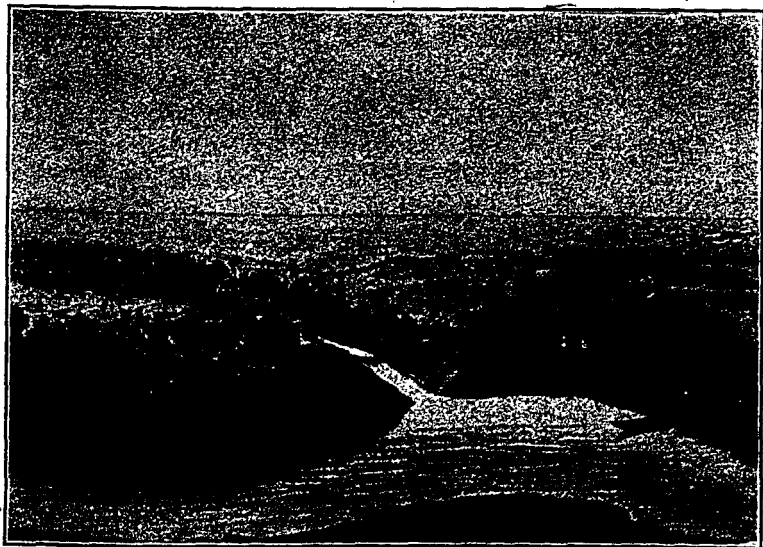
Company, but it had never been strong enough to try it. Now the lands through which the Nor'westers had to pass were given to Selkirk, and he was going to make real use of them. By planting a colony there he could close the gate to the Athabaska country, and thereby kill the North West Company. Neither Selkirk nor the Hudson's Bay Company had any such purpose, but every Nor'wester believed that they had. To the Nor'westers it was a fight for their lives, and in such struggles men stop at nothing.

The Nor'westers first tried to prevent Selkirk from planting the colony, and they had strong friends in London and Scotland. They even used customs officials and recruiting officers to break up the parties which he was collecting to send out. But they could not prevent him from planting the colony, and, therefore, they determined to pull it up by the roots.

They began cautiously. They already had a fort at the forks of the Red and the Assiniboine, Fort Gibraltar, which had been built in 1804. They also had an abandoned fort where the Pembina flows into the Red. This they re-occupied before Miles Macdonell arrived. Here were two forts right in the midst of the enemies' camp, and they used them. The Nor'westers at Pembina tried to discourage the half-breeds from selling supplies to the settlers, and the Nor'westers in both forts tried to persuade the settlers to desert. At the same time, they began to annoy the colony in countless little ways. They hoped that this would disgust the settlers and make them give up. Things might have gone on thus for some time, if it had not been for Macdonell's action in 1814.

Because the first crop had failed, there was a shortage of food in the colony. The country, however, abounded in food. Tons of pemmican were taken out every year by both the English and the Canadian companies. Macdonell did not think it right to let all this food go out while his men were short. Did it not really belong to the colony? Should not

the colonists have the first right? On January 8th, 1814, he issued a proclamation prohibiting for one year the export of any provisions without his written permission. The Nor'westers laughed until the spring, when Macdonell began to seize pemmican from them. The proclamation was now a very serious matter. All the canoes going to and fro between Lake



The rival forts at Pembina.

Superior and the Athabaska country were provisioned right there. Without provisions they could not move.

The news of what was happening sped down the rivers to Fort William, where the Montreal partners arrived in June. They decided that it was time to strike hard, and they ordered that the colony must be destroyed by fair means or by foul. The settlers were to be promised free passage and provisions to go to lands in Upper Canada. Those who refused to be tempted away in this manner were to be driven away.

Duncan Cameron, who commanded at Fort Gibraltar, undertook the first part of the task—the tempting. Through all the winter months of 1814-1815, Fort Gibraltar was gay<sup>er</sup> than it had ever been before. Duncan Cameron was a Highlander, and he was busy entertaining the Highland settlers. There were parties every night—dancing, bag-pipes, and whiskey—and, of course, Cameron always talked to them in their own language, Gaelic. He was persuading them that the Nor'westers were really their best friends. He even persuaded some of the innocent people to break into their own store-houses and carry off to Fort Gibraltar a few little cannon that had been brought for their own defence. Some, however, would not yield to temptation.

To deal with these stubborn creatures, the Nor'westers began to get an army ready. The material for it was right there in the half-breed population. Miles Macdonell had turned them against him by trying to stop their sale of pemmican to the North West Company. During all the time that Cameron was making merry in his fort, other Nor'westers were going about among the Métis telling them that the land was really theirs, and that these strangers were stealing it from them. They were stirring up the Métis to attack the colony. Long ago the prophet said: "They have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind." These Canadians of the North West Company were sowing the wind; in later years other Canadians were to reap the whirlwind—the two Riel Rebellions—for the half-breeds never forgot the lesson that the country was theirs.

As the spring of 1815 began to blossom, the settlers began to feel very nervous. Métis passed by "night and day singing Indian war songs." All the horses of the colony disappeared, shot from thickets or run off by nimble feet. The Métis forced the settlers to give up all their guns, and they plundered some of their houses. The terror grew until well on in June, and

then Miles Macdonell gave up the struggle and surrendered to the Nor'westers. He explained that it was "for the safety of the colony." But it did not work out that way.

A flotilla of North West canoes now set out for Fort William. It was commanded by Duncan Cameron and carried his prisoner, Macdonell, and one hundred and thirty-four deserters from the colony, men, women, and children. Macdonell was charged with robbing the North West Company, but he was never tried, and, as we shall see, he later returned to the banks of the Red River. The deserters never came back; many of them settled on farms in Upper Canada, where some of their descendants are still living.

Meanwhile, the Métis continued their persecution of the faithful, trampling down the crops and burning all the houses. Thus they drove them off. About the end of June, some fifty of the settlers took to their boats and fled to Norway House at the north end of Lake Winnipeg. A few days later, one of the leading Nor'westers, Simon McGillivray, reported: "I am happy to inform you that the colony has been all knocked on the head by the N. W. Co."

But it takes more than a knock on the head to kill a Scot, and this was a Scottish colony. One of the settlers and three servants of the Hudson's Bay Company who were stationed at the forks refused to budge. They were left alone, probably because it did not seem worth while bothering about just four men. They struggled to save what crops they could, and they began to build Fort Douglas, which they named after Selkirk. They hung on, confident that reinforcements would soon arrive. Nor were they disappointed.

At the very time of the "expulsion," a number of Hudson's Bay officials, with a party of Canadian voyageurs whom they had got together, were speeding west from Montreal. Finding what had happened at the forks, they rushed up to Norway House and brought the refugees back to begin again amid the

ashes of their homes. The harvest was now gathered, and it turned out to be much richer than they had expected. On November 3rd, another party arrived—more settlers under Robert Semple, who came to succeed Macdonell as governor. He and his sturdy flock had landed at York Factory late in August and had rushed on as soon as they heard of the disaster. Great was the rejoicing on the banks of the Red River. "The colours were hoisted, the guns were fired, at night we laughed and drank and danced," wrote Semple, in describing his first day in the settlement. The young colony was planted a second time and was more alive than ever.

During the winter of 1815 and the early spring of 1816, the Selkirk settlers turned the tables on the North West Company. Semple actually arrested Duncan Cameron, who was back in Fort Gibraltar, and sent him off to York Factory that he might be tried in England. Nor'wester canoes were stopped, and the mail which they carried was seized. When they were opened, the letters showed that there was a complete plot to destroy the colony once and for all. To protect the settlers, Semple now ordered the destruction of Fort Gibraltar, which was immediately taken and pulled down. The materials were used to strengthen Fort Douglas.

But the Nor'westers were preparing a more terrible blow than they had struck in the previous year. Cuthbert Grant, the half-breed son of a Scottish trader of the same name, was gathering an army of Métis up the Assiniboine. On June 1st, some of them appeared at the Hudson's Bay Company's Brandon House. They plundered it so thoroughly that they carried off even the grindstone.

Within three weeks, Grant and his rabble poured down the Assiniboine, making straight for the colony. When four miles away, they struck off towards the north-east. They were going to go around Fort Douglas to join an expedition which the partners had promised to lead from Fort William to assist in wiping



out the settlement. This expedition, however, was several days late, for the white men knew that blood would probably be shed, and they preferred to let the half-breeds do it. Semple knew nothing of these plans. All he knew was that a hostile body of half-breeds was moving around the settlement. Immediately he dashed out with thirty men to face them, advancing along what is now Main Street in Winnipeg. On their way, they met a number of frightened settlers rushing back to Fort Douglas for safety.

Seven good oak trees grew on Frog Plain, where the two forces met on the evening of June 19th, 1816. They have given their name to the foul deed which was done there. One half-breed rushed at Semple, calling out in broken English, "What do you want? What do you want?" Semple replied, "What do you want?" "We want our fort," came the reply, referring to Fort Gibraltar, which had been destroyed. "Well go to your fort," Semple snapped, seizing the half-breed's gun. At once a shot was fired. Who fired it, nobody knows. But that

does not matter very much, for when blood is hot and men have guns, one of the guns is sure to go off, and then the rest go off too. Soon Governor Semple and twenty-one of his men lay dead upon the ground. Grant lost only one man. Three days later, the settlers again went down the river and made for Norway House. Thus was the colony uprooted a second time.

This "massacre" of Seven Oaks, or of Frog Plain, is a black mark on Canadian history. Semple was in reality the only government in the country. It was his duty to protect the



The Seven Oaks monument.

settlers. While doing it, he and his men were shot down. A number of half-civilized Métis committed the crime at the bidding of a number of lawless Canadian merchants. These merchants then paid them handsomely for it, and prevented any of them from being punished, because they had great influence with the government and the law courts of Canada. Those who ordered the crime and those who committed it saw only a glorious victory. A number of Nor'westers were gathered at Portage la Prairie to hear what had happened at the forks. When the news came, they "all shouted with joy." The Métis gloried in their triumph so much that their descendants still sing its story a century afterwards.

While the corpses of Governor Semple and his men were lying on Frog Plain, help was already coming from the East. Lork Selkirk himself was on the way from Montreal with about one hundred men. These were not Scots, but were Swiss soldiers, whom Britain had used against the United States in the War of 1812. At the close of the war they were discharged, and Selkirk, who arrived in Canada at this time, at once engaged them. They were the kind of men that he wanted, men who would both till the soil and defend the colony. They were known as "De Meurons," because that was the name of their regiment.

Miles Macdonell, free at last, was also hurrying west with a few men. He was far ahead of Selkirk and reached Lake Winnipeg before he heard of the tragedy. Then he rushed back to Selkirk, whom he met at Sault Ste. Marie, and told him the terrible news. Up to that time, Selkirk had intended to avoid the Nor'westers on his way to the Red River. Now he changed his plans and struck straight at Fort William. Was it not a nest of robbers and murderers? Moreover, some of his settlers were kept prisoners there, having been carried off from the colony. Therefore, he seized Fort William, released the prisoners, arrested some of the leading Nor'westers,

and found papers which proved that they were guilty of having ordered the crime. He decided to remain where he was for the winter. His men would have found nothing to eat at the forks if they had pushed on, and they would have been discouraged if they had had to turn back.

Meanwhile, he sent on Macdonell with sixty men to recapture the colony if possible. Marching on snow-shoes and pulling two small guns on sledges, they reached the mouth of the Pembina on the last day of the year. Macdonell took Fort Daer almost at once, and then he headed north for Fort Douglas. He attacked it by night, and, before daybreak, he was master of the fort and had sixteen prisoners.

In the spring of 1817, the colony was planted for a third time. The exiles again returned from Norway House, and Selkirk arrived with his De Meurons. For four months, he managed the settlement, planning roads, bridges, and mills, and directing agricultural operations. He was keenly interested in agriculture and had made a great success of his estates at home. He was determined to do the same in this new part of the New World. "So correct and unerring was his judgment that nothing planned at this early date could in after years be altered to advantage." These were the words of a man who shortly afterwards came to the settlement and lived there until he died many years later.

Though he had lost over half a million dollars in his efforts to plant the colony, Selkirk now forgave the settlers the payments which they were supposed to make for their lands. He also won the respect of the Indians, who worshipped him as the "Silver Chief." He persuaded them to sign the first Indian treaty of the North-West. By this treaty, they gave up all their claim to the land lying along the Red and the Assiniboine Rivers.

This was perhaps the happiest time of Selkirk's life. Unfortunately, it did not last long. He had to return to Canada,

to attend to the lawsuits which he had brought against the Nor'westers and those which they had brought against him. We have seen how the Nor'westers had broken the law by their violence against the colony. He also had broken the law at Fort William. There he had taken what did not belong to him, the property of the Nor'westers, and had resisted arrest when his enemies found a magistrate to sign a warrant for that purpose. He thought that the warrant was a fraud, as he did not know that there was any legal magistrate near that part of the country. He was now to pay dearly for these two actions.

On September 9th, 1817, Selkirk turned his back upon the land of his dreams, and from that moment he knew no peace. He could not get justice in Canada, and, therefore, he appealed to Britain. But even the home government was prejudiced against him. His health was broken, and his mind was heavily burdened by the worries of his law suits and by the fact that all men seemed turned against him. He died in April, 1820, really a Canadian martyr.

In his death, Selkirk helped the settlement even more than in his life. By dying, he removed its great enemy, the North West Company. The reason for this was that the Nor'westers were played out. The story of how this happened is very interesting.

In their race against the Hudson's Bay Company the Nor'westers had won and lost. We have seen how they won. This is how they lost. By pushing their trade across the Rocky Mountains, they had exhausted themselves. They had now to carry their goods and their furs a still greater distance. Therefore, they had to pay out more money, and this left them a smaller profit. Nor was this all the trouble. Just as the trade to the North-West had tied up capital for a year longer than trade to Michilimackinac, the new trade on the Pacific slope added still another year between the time when

the goods were bought and the time when they were paid for by the sale of the furs for which they were traded. The profits from the same amount of capital had to be spread over a longer time, and this made them thinner. Therefore, the Nor'westers were not actually successful, even though they were viciously aggressive and gathered rich harvests of furs in Montreal. Their profits were disappearing, and they were desperate. This further explains why they were so bitter against the colony.

For several years, the Nor'westers had been coming to see that their only hope of escape from bankruptcy lay in joining their rivals, and they had made several attempts to do it. Many in the Hudson's Bay Company would have been glad to strike a bargain with them for the reason that they were dangerous rivals, but from the time that Selkirk threatened to strangle the Nor'westers' trade, and they tried to strangle his colony, it was impossible to bring about a union. His power in one company and his hatred of the other kept the two apart until he died. Then, in less than a year, the Hudson's Bay Company bought out the North West Company.

Throughout the country, wherever the fur trade was carried on, away up to the Arctic and out to the Pacific, this union of 1821 wrought a great change. Many posts now became unnecessary and had to be closed; others had to be developed. Men who had been fighting one another had to be persuaded to work together in the one great company which took the place of the two smaller rivals. The channels of trade had to be changed. No longer was it necessary for goods to come up and for furs to go down over the more expensive Lake Superior and Ottawa River route. Thenceforth, Fort William saw only an occasional canoe bearing mail or passengers between Canada and the North-West. Norway House became the great meeting place of the fur trade chiefs. Now there were only two doors for freight to come in and to go out of the country—Hudson Bay and the Pacific coast, to which vessels plied around Cape Horn.

Even the method of transportation was altered. No longer was there any race for furs, and, therefore, speed lost its great importance. Consequently, the swift canoe was replaced by the slower York boat as the ordinary means of carrying goods and furs. The York boat was much cheaper to use, as it held more, it seldom wore out, and it needed fewer men and less skill in



Sir George Simpson.

handling. In short, the whole business of the fur trade had to be reorganized. This gigantic task was carried through by a young man of genius, George Simpson. Twenty years later, he became Sir George, and to-day, a century afterwards, he is remembered as the greatest governor that the company ever placed in charge of its business on this continent.

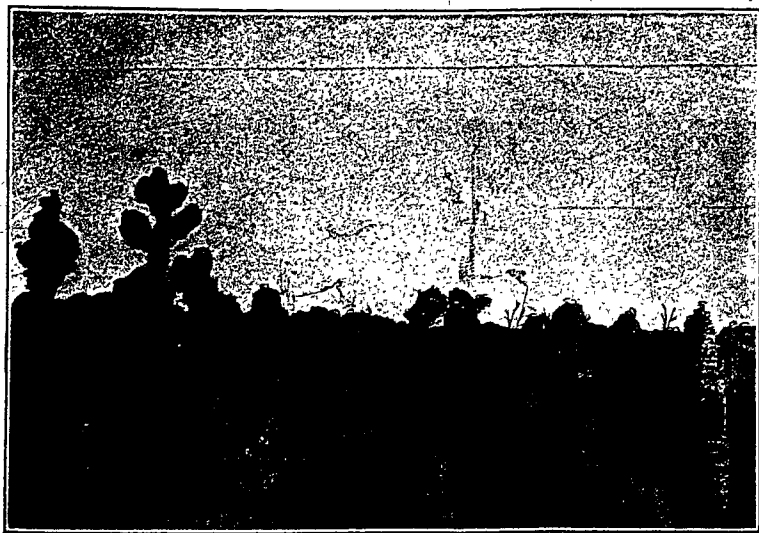
After this reorganization, the Hudson's Bay Company carried on its trade more vigorously than ever, and even more than before it

continued to be a civilizing influence among the natives. But the interest of our story shifts to the life of the people who had begun to till the soil, the forerunners of the people who now fill the Prairie Provinces. The little colony planted by Lord Selkirk benefitted by the union of 1821, for that removed the enemy that had twice pulled it up by the roots. But it did not bring heaven down to earth on the banks of the Red River, as we shall see in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER XII

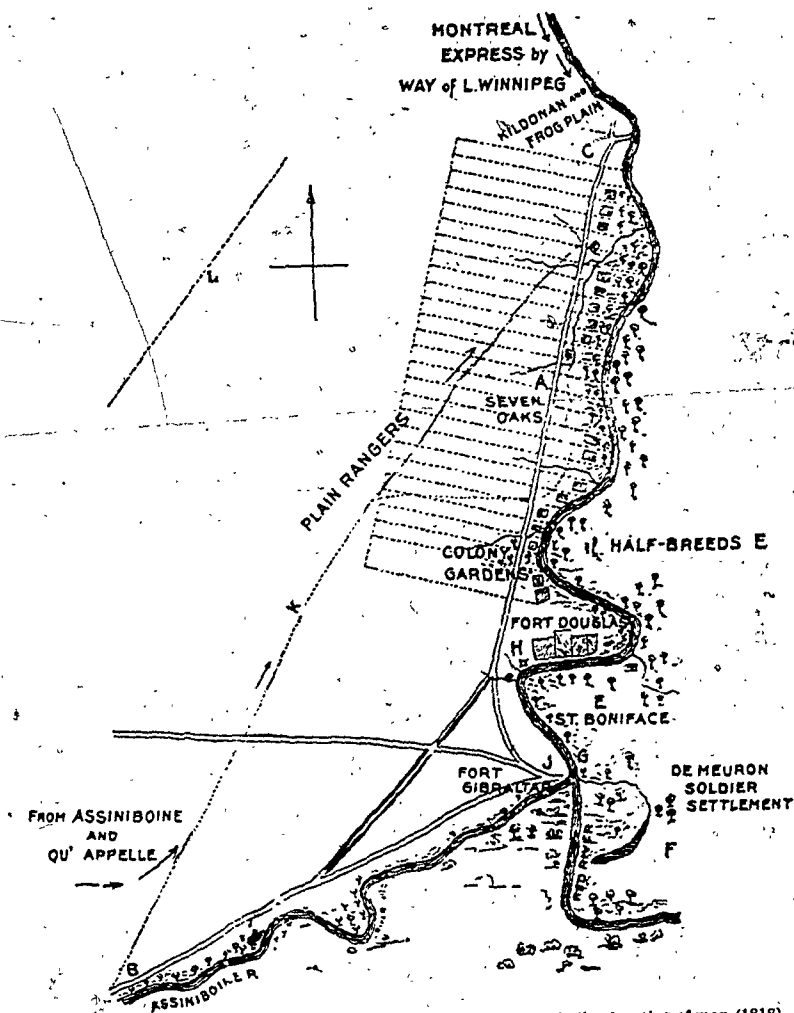
### *Life on the Banks of the Red River.*

A curse seemed to rest upon the land. Immediately after Selkirk left in 1817, a heavy frost and a violent storm destroyed the whole harvest and forced the colonists to live on buffalo



The Red River Settlement, 1823.

meat. In the following year, grasshoppers appeared in clouds so thick that they hid the sun. They settled down upon the fields several inches deep. All that was saved from what had been a promising crop were a few potatoes and some ears of half-ripe barley, which the women gathered in their aprons. For three years the plague continued, devouring all green



—Face-simile of section of map (1818).

### The Red River Settlement.

A.—Seven Oaks, where Sempé fell. B.—Creek where Métis left Assiniboine. C.—Frog Plain (since Kildonan church). E to F.—De Meuron settlers on Selkirk. G.—Half-breeds (St. Boniface of to-day). H.—Fort Douglas (1815). I.—Colony gardens. J.—Fort Gibraltar (N.W. Co.). K.—Road followed by Métis. L.—Dry cart trail west of settlers' lots.



things and even poisoning the water. Winter after winter, a large part of the settlement moved up to Pembina to keep from starving. At the end of the third visitation of the locusts, the settlers had no grain left. To procure seed, they had to go by snow-shoe to the Mississippi and bring their precious freight up by flat-boat as soon as the ice went out of the rivers. In the fall of 1825, the colony was threatened by an invasion of mice, but they disappeared before they did much damage. When we remember these misfortunes, it is not surprising to learn that many of the settlers did not taste bread until they had been in the country for six years.

The worst calamities of all came in 1826. An extremely heavy fall of snow during the winter drove the buffalo from the neighbourhood and forced the hunters from the colony to go much farther in search of their prey. Thirty-three of them died of starvation or exposure out on the wintry plains. In the spring, the rivers could not hold all the waters from the melting snow. They overflowed their banks, and for miles the prairie was covered with a great inland sea. The waves sometimes dashed over the roofs of the houses. Buildings, cattle, and farm implements were swept away by the flood which did not subside for weeks. When the settlers returned from the hills to which they had fled, many of them had to begin life all over again. Then nature, having vied with man in a vain effort to blot out the little colony, repented of her cruelty. The curse was lifted, and from this time forth the land yielded a bounteous harvest almost every year.

When the colony was planted for the third time in 1817, the Scottish settlers at Kildonan on the west bank of the Red River numbered fewer than two hundred. Across the river were about a hundred of the De Meurons. They were German-speaking Swiss, and, because St. Boniface was the patron saint of the Germans, the place was called St. Boniface. In the following year a number of French came from Canada, and

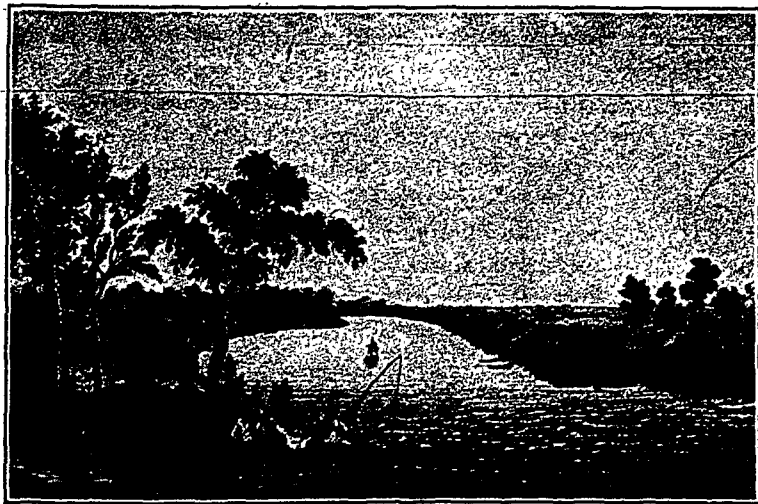
built their cabins along with the Métis, who were also on the east bank. In 1821, a party of French Swiss arrived, having come via York Factory. As this party included many unmarried women and the De Meurons were mostly unmarried soldiers, many marriages took place. But the Swiss had little love for the country, and that little was washed away by the floods of 1826.

Throwing up their hands and their holdings, the Swiss ran off to Minnesota. At the same time, many of the French went back to Canada, where the St. Lawrence never overflows its banks. These, however, were the only desertions. The Métis were on their native soil, and the Scots were Scots. They hung on as Scots do, even though they suffered an additional hardship which some of them thought worse than locusts or floods—the want of a Presbyterian minister.

In spite of all the disasters and the exodus of 1826, the population of the colony was growing. At the time of the flood it was about fifteen hundred. The growth was due to three causes. One was the birth of children. The second was the retirement of many Hudson's Bay Company servants, who felt more at home on the banks of the Red River than anywhere else and, therefore, settled there. The third cause was the greatest of all and led to the majority of the population being half-breeds. It resulted from the disappearance of the North West Company in 1821. When the Hudson's Bay Company began to use York boats instead of canoes, many Métis who were skilled canoe-men lost their jobs. They now joined the little colony of their own relatives who had already squatted near the forks.

There was no immigration, because there was nothing to draw it and much to discourage it. For this, neither the Hudson's Bay Company nor the Selkirk estate, the owner of the colony, was to blame. Both had lost a great deal of money in trying to put the colony on its feet. The grasshopper plague

would have killed it, as the settlers had neither seed nor money to buy any, had not Selkirk's executors come to the rescue. They paid more than five thousand dollars cash for two hundred and fifty bushels of seed grain which the settlers fetched from the Mississippi. The executors, of course, were acting on business principles. A great deal of money had been spent in making the colony; they would have got none back if



Fort Douglas on the Red River—a summer view. Drawn from nature in July, 1822.

they had let it die. But in giving assistance, they were as generous as Selkirk himself. He had established a store which gave goods on credit, and they continued it. He planned an ideal experimental farm, which they established and kept up at great cost until a fire destroyed some of the buildings. Then they gave it up as a bad job, having lost ten thousand dollars in it.

The colony had only one bad governor. That was Alexander Macdonell, who succeeded Semple. The people heartily de-

tested him and called him "Grasshopper Governor," because he was as bad as the plague. Fortunately one of the executors visited the colony and found him out. He was then dismissed in 1822.

In spite of the failure of the first experimental farm, the executors later established a second, but the loss on this was nearly twice as great as on the first, even though there was a good governor now. Another experiment was the Buffalo Wool Company. Someone had the brilliant idea of providing steady wages for many of the colonists by employing them to manufacture cloth and shawls from the fur of the buffalo. But Lady Selkirk tried in vain to make buffalo shawls fashionable, and the cloth would not sell in London for more than one-tenth of what it cost to make it on the banks of the Red River. In 1825, the company failed, having used up all its capital. All the shareholders lost every penny that they had put into it, and the Hudson's Bay Company lost an even greater sum, which it had lent as the banker of the company. The only ones to gain were the settlers, who got as wages most of the money that the others lost. It was the first money that they had seen in the country, and they used it well by purchasing cattle in the United States.

This was only one of the many mad schemes which began in hope and ended in disaster. The Hudson's Bay Company and others who invested money in these schemes always lost, and often the settlers suffered too. A Flax and Hemp Company gave out seed and offered prizes for the best results, but the worst results followed—the company failed, and the crop rotted in the fields. A Tallow Company ate up more of the Hudson's Bay Company's money without doing the colonists any good. Much money was also lost in buying fourteen hundred sheep down in Missouri; only two hundred and fifty survived the long journey. Sir George Simpson, the governor-in-chief of Rupert's Land, burnt his fingers again and again

in such schemes and was greatly discouraged. He said that there was a "strange fatality attending this unfortunate colony."

Those who know the Canadian prairie as the wheat bin of the New and the Old Worlds may wonder why there should be any "strange fatality" about this country. But there was a very good reason. These pioneers might raise the finest wheat on earth, but all that they could do with it was to eat it, and the farmer who eats all that he produces may grow fat, but he never grows rich. Until the railroad came, the cost of sending to market was greater than the price received on the market.

For over two hundred years, ever since white settlement began to push inland in North America, pioneers have faced this problem. Countless means have been tried to get over the difficulty. Some have succeeded, and some have failed. The colony on the banks of the Red River was too cut off by its geographical position to find any solution. The only market which it possessed was the limited one provided by the Hudson's Bay Company, which took an average of only eight bushels of wheat from each settler. Therefore, the settler cultivated only the end of his long narrow farm, where his log shanty lay next the river. To do more would have been foolish.

On the upper parts of the farms, and very commonly on the prairie which was as free as the air, wild hay was cut. Every man picked his spot and frequently marked it as his own by cutting a circle around it. He had little occasion to be greedy, because it would have been useless to gather more hay than his own stock would eat during the winter. And his own stock was not very numerous, because he could sell very little. In the summer, the animals ran wild, but through the winter they had to be housed and fed. Horses were raised for the same reason that people buy automobiles to-day—for pleasure and for business. Everyone was at home in the saddle,

which was sometimes just a flat bundle of hay with rope stirrups, and the fleetest horse was of greatest value in hunting buffalo.

Because they could sell little, the settlers could buy little, and therefore they had to make practically everything that they needed. They were very happy, however, because they were simple peasant folk who knew how to do things for themselves, because they were kept busy, and because all the members of each family toiled together to make the home and to keep it going. Many delightful memories of those days when wives and daughters and fathers and sons helped one another in the field and in the cottage have been collected and preserved by the Women's Canadian Club of Winnipeg in a book called *Women of Red River*.

Many a woman's hand laboured with her husband's in building the little houses of one or two rooms which lined the river bank. The walls were made of logs, and the chinks were filled with mud. Parchment served for windows, and the roof was thatched. The fireplaces, for they had no stoves at first, were not at all like those we see to-day. Branches were fastened together to form a skeleton for the fireplace and chimney, which were then built up with water, clay, and straw worked into a paste. This soon dried and the fire burnt it like a brick. It had only one serious weakness. It crumbled when the floods came. Many cottages had only dirt floors packed hard by the constant tramp of feet. As there were no sawmills for many years, all the lumber for doors, partitions, and floors had to be cut by hand. This was done in "sawpits," where logs were ripped up by two men, one standing above and the other below, working a cross-cut saw up and down. This was one of the few operations in which the women did not usually share.

The resourcefulness of mankind is one of the wonders of the world, and no people have ever displayed more resourcefulness

than these settlers. Living on a river, they needed boats. Birch bark craft would have been too fragile for their needs, and, therefore, they hollowed out large tree trunks and shaped them something like canoes. They also needed vehicles for the land, but there were no wagons or anything else on wheels in the country, and they could not afford to import them. Therefore, with what simple tools they possessed, they made the famous Red River carts. Though built entirely of wood with-



A Red River cart.

out a scrap of iron, these carts were very strong. Each was capable of carrying half a ton. It had two large wheels, five feet high, with wide rims of three inches. Small and thin wheels constructed without any metal could not have stood the strain and would have cut deep into the wet prairie instead of rolling over its surface. The body was a light box frame balanced over the axle to which it was fastened. The whole thing was held together by wooden pegs and wedges and by strips of roughly-tanned ox-hide called "shagganappe." The

harness was also of shagganappe and homemade. These carts introduced a strange noise into the silence of the plain, as they creaked over the rough roads or open prairie. When a number of them were being driven together, they could be heard a long way off. To-day a Red River cart is a great curiosity, but for many years there was no other kind of wheeled vehicle in the country.

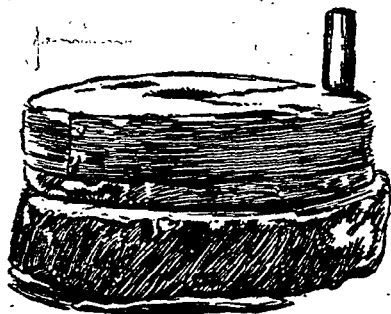
Though the settlers used only a small part of their farms, they had to do a great deal of work upon them, very much more than they would have to do now. Fences had to be re-made every spring—of poplar poles which dried during the summer and were then cut up for winter fuel. Years passed before they tilled the land with a wooden plough shod with iron and drawn by oxen, and before they used the first clumsy reapers. Until then, they worked the soil with spade and hoe. Even in this back-breaking task, the women folk often helped. In harvest time, all the women who could go into the fields went out to join the men in cutting, binding, and stooking. They had to do this because harvesting was then an even more urgent business than it is to-day, and it was very much slower. It was more urgent because the wheat then used shelled very easily, and a brisk wind might cause great loss. It was slower because it was all done by hand, the men swinging scythes and the women wielding sickles. The sheaves were bound with willow switches. The hay was cut in the same way as the wheat, by men and women, and was gathered with large homemade wooden rakes.

The crops were threshed with a flail as in the days of the Old Testament, and the wheat was ground by each family with a very crude hand-mill. This was called a "quern," and was made of two flat stones, one fitting on top of the other. The upper stone had a handle by which it could be turned upon the grain that was placed between the stones. Even when windmills were built, years afterwards, querns



were often used. Sometimes the mills got enough power from the breeze to grind the grain but not to bolt the grist. Then the settlers took the grist home and bolted it themselves. They used a big sieve made of brass wire and hung from a beam in the ceiling. Underneath, they placed a table with a white cloth. Then, by pouring the grist into the sieve and shaking it, they sifted the flour on to the cloth. Of course the flour was not as white as the tablecover, nor was it as fine as what we use, but it made the most wholesome bread in the world. It was usually baked in a large outside mud oven. When a batch of bread was done and the oven was still hot, mother would sometimes make a great treat for the children, who did not know what candies were. She would brown a little flour and mix it with molasses.

Each family had a milkhouse, a small outbuilding with a thatched roof and a deep cellar. Butter-making was not so easy as it has since



The Norquay churn.

become. The churns were made at home, and so were the oaken pans in which the milk stood over-night for the cream to rise. In the morning, when these churns were emptied after the skimming, the women scrubbed them thoroughly with many waters and a strong homemade willow brush and set them out to air until the evening. Not until about 1860 was the work lightened by the introduction of tin coolers that were much easier to clean.

During the winter, there was no fresh meat. Though there was a salt spring from which the French made salt which they sold, it was so scarce that it was seldom used to preserve meat. To keep it over the winter, meat was usually dried. Sugar was

also so rare that there were no cakes, pies, or preserves. The only fruit which the settlers tasted was what grew wild—raspberries, blueberries, chokecherries, saskatoons, and wild plums. For use in the winter, they were pressed into cakes and dried. So little was known of other fruits that, many years after the first settlers came, the children did not understand what their new teacher from England meant when she told them that the earth was shaped like an orange.

Pemmican, of which a handful made a good meal, was a common food in the settlement. Though the voyageurs often ate it raw, these people usually cooked it. When boiled with potatoes and onions, it was called rubaboo; when mixed with flour and water and fried, it was known as rowchow. Rabbits, of which there were at times too many, and also fish helped to sustain the colony on the Red River, particularly after a visit of the grasshoppers, for every now and then they returned.

In some lean years, whole families had to move up to Lakes Winnipeg and Manitoba for the winter. Many of them must have been thoroughly sick of fish before the spring came. Even as late as 1868, the people were threatened with a serious shortage of food. The locusts were so thick that they fell in heaps about the walls of Fort Garry, and the piles made such a smell that they had to be carted away and burned. The summer buffalo hunt was a failure, and so were the fisheries in the lakes. Many people might have starved had not the Hudson's Bay Company and others sent assistance from the outside world.

For a long time, all the starch which the settlers used for cooking and for the laundry was made at home from potatoes. The women ground them and pressed the pulp through a cloth stretched over a tub with water where the starch settled. All the family's clothing was also homemade. June was sheep-shearing time, but the process of making the wool into clothes was spread over the rest of the year, and in many households

the baby's hands were perhaps the only ones that did not help. Many winter evenings were spent in teasing, carding, and spinning the wool—on homemade spinning wheels. On homemade looms, the yarn was woven into blankets and cloth. One very old lady who recalls these days of long ago says: "We used to get sturgeon oil from the Indians in birch bark rogans and put it on the wool to make it work easier, and then when the blankets were made we had to wash the oil out of the wool. We used to have an enormous tub into which we put the blankets and soap and water, and the girls would get in in their bare feet and tread on the blankets, and when that had been done long enough the girls would put on their stockings and shoes, and then the boys would wring the blankets out." Like everything else, even the soap was home-made.

A very common article of trade in the community, sometimes used as the admission price of an entertainment, was the big flat sinew from the buffalo's back. It was about two feet long and two inches wide. It took the place of a spool of thread, for threads, fine or coarse as desired, could be pulled off along the whole sinew. Before the first shoes, which had stout brass toecaps, were brought into the colony, many a mother made all the footwear of the family. The leather came from buffalo or oxen and was tanned with willow bark in a wooden tub, which was sometimes the family dug-out canoe.

Most of the cottages had no furniture except what the settlers made themselves. The floors were quite bare except for a few mats which the Indians made out of rushes and stained with vegetable dyes. Candles were uncommon in the early years, but logs blazing in the fireplace threw out a strong light, or a bowl of grease with a piece of rag for a wick made a feeble glow when evening fell. Glass lamps did not appear until about ten years before the province of Manitoba was born. Twenty years after the settlement began, there was one piano in the

community—brought all the way from England. But the people were not without music, for they had voices and violins. Many were the parties on winter nights in the cottages of the Red River, when dancing feet kept time to the fiddles.

Old ladies still living remember their school days when they practised making their letters on brown paper from the Hudson's



Colonists on the Red River.

1 and 2. A Swiss colonist with his wife and children. 3. A German colonist. 4. A Scottish Highland colonist. 5. An immigrant colonist from French Canada.

Bay Company's store with bits of charcoal from the fire at home. Sometimes they had only a piece of clay to write on a slate. These ladies also recall little shops which had no paper or string to tie up parcels. When Indians or settlers bought anything, they also had to buy a cotton handkerchief to wrap it in.

The Selkirk settlers were not really farmers any more than they were manufacturers or even traders. To a certain extent they fitted themselves into the ways of the Métis. After all,

these were the ways of the country. The Métis, who were six or seven times as numerous, paid even less attention to agriculture. They earned a little now and then from the Hudson's Bay Company in any way that they could—chiefly in carrying goods. Similarly the Selkirk settlers hired out themselves and their carts whenever they could. They also followed the Métis example of selling the company a little fish and a lot of meat, the produce of the buffalo hunt.

The greatest excitement in the life of the community was the buffalo hunt. Usually there were two expeditions, the "summer hunt" beginning in June, and the "autumn hunt" beginning in August, each lasting about two months. Most of the men, women, and children who went along were Métis, but the Selkirk settlers also joined. Over five hundred carts gathered for the "summer hunt," or "first trip" as it was also called, in 1820. In twenty years the number was more than doubled.

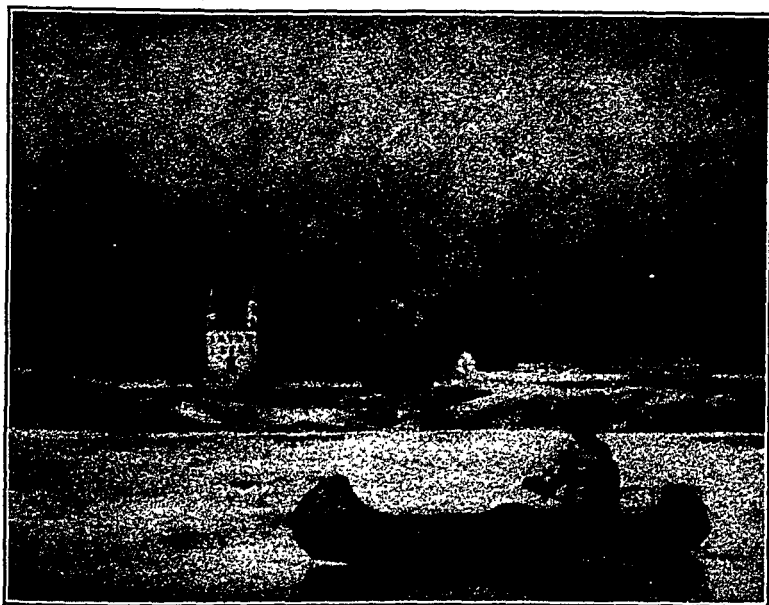
The whole cavalcade was excellently organized. Shortly after setting out, they held a meeting on the open prairie. There they elected their officers, ten guides and ten captains. Ten men were appointed to serve under each captain. The guides took daily turns in leading the expedition. Every morning the guide's flag was hoisted as a signal for breaking camp. In half an hour they were away, and the guide was supreme commander until his flag came down in the evening as the signal to pitch camp. Then the captains, of whom one was senior, were supreme. They appointed the place of every cart and regulated everything in the camp. The carts were drawn up in a close circle, with the shafts turned to the outside. Within the circle, the tents were pitched on one side, and the animals were tethered on the other. The leaders framed the laws of the camp and enforced them by such penalties as cutting up the offender's saddle and bridle or his coat, or by flogging him.

The expedition might travel more than two hundred miles before sighting a herd of buffalo. Then the hunters, on specially trained horses, were drawn up like a little army under the senior captain, who issued his orders. At the command "Start!" the charge commenced. For some distance they dashed over the plains straight at the herd before it took fright. Then there was a mad chase. A good horseman on a good mount seldom fired until within three or four yards of his victim. His horse immediately sprang aside to avoid stumbling over the carcass and rushed on to reach the next victim. The hunter shot and loaded at the full gallop, his mouth being full of balls, which he spat down the muzzle, for those were the days of muzzle loaders. In a few minutes, hundreds of animals lay dead upon the plain. Then each rider returned and with never a mistake picked out all the beasts that he had slain. The carts came out and brought the carcasses back to the camp, where they were cut up. Ten hundredweight of buffalo meat was a full load for each cart to bear back to the settlement.

One thing the colonists were not allowed to do, and that was to trade in furs. This was a condition which the company insisted upon when Selkirk was granted the land, and it was really in the interests of the colony as well as of the company. It would have ceased to be a settlement, if its members had been free to adopt the unsettled life of the trader. In old Canada, the government had not been able to prevent the habitants from running off to the woods to become *coureurs de bois*, because they could carry their furs to the English on the Atlantic coast. The Hudson's Bay Company was not so helpless, because those in the North-West who had furs to sell had nowhere else to go. In guarding its interests, the company went a little too far at first. It even prevented the settlers from trading with the Indians for horses, moose and deer skins, and provisions for their own use. But the colonists and the

Selkirk estate objected, and the company became more reasonable.

Until Lord Selkirk's day, the company had no permanent post in the vicinity of the forks. Then, with one eye on the settlers and one eye on the fur trade, the company sent its agents there. Three of them, it will be remembered, watched



The first St. Boniface Cathedral.

over the deserted colony in the summer of 1816. Not until the union of the rival companies in 1821 was Fort Garry built. Fourteen years afterwards, it was rebuilt of stone. Only the gate of this fort still remains. In 1831, the company began to construct Lower Fort Garry, nineteen miles below, an imposing group of buildings surrounded by a great stone wall.

With the beginning of regular settlement, the church appeared. It came to serve the community and also to reach out a hand to the wandering natives. Miles Macdonnell was a devout Roman Catholic, and he persuaded Selkirk that Roman Catholicism should be the chief religion in the new colony. To establish it, he brought out an Irish priest with the first party in 1811, but the priest was such a poor one that he never got any farther than York Factory. Macdonnell then turned to the French Canadian bishop of Québec. He would

be most likely to help, because there were so many French-speaking people in the West. Selkirk supported his appeal, and the bishop decided to send a missionary from Canada.

Father Provencher arrived at the forks in 1818. At once, he



The first Anglican Cathedral.

and his helpers built a log house. They used part of it as a residence for themselves and the other part as a chapel. In two months they baptized seventy-two children. Very appropriately, this founder of the Roman Catholic Church in Western Canada was made a bishop in 1822. Under his fostering care, the French half-breeds became more like their white cousins. He established schools; he had the girls taught weaving; and he encouraged agriculture in many ways, from planting fruit trees that would not grow to putting his own hand to the plough which did go.

In 1820, an Anglican, the Reverend John West, came to the colony as chaplain to the Hudson's Bay Company. He



built a little church, which was later replaced by St. John's Cathedral, and opened the first school, which was the forerunner of St. John's College. His flock was not nearly so numerous as that of Bishop Provencher. There were actually more Presbyterians than Anglicans in the settlement, but the Scots had to wait many years before they received a minister of their own persuasion. In fact, it was not until 1851 that the



Worship in the early days of the Settlement.

Reverend John Black, a Presbyterian minister, arrived at the Red River.

Lawlessness, which seems strange now, was common then. In 1822, Governor Bulger tried to put the fear of authority into some evil-doers by a striking example. An Indian who had tried to commit murder was lashed to a gun and given a thorough flogging before the eyes of all the people. One great reason for so much lawlessness was because there was little government, and that little was very weak. Beside the governor, what was there? An appointed council of half a

dozen settlers who did practically nothing; a sheriff who might be the company's chief trader at Fort Garry; and an odd constable who had his own affairs to attend to. This was the whole government. It had no revenue with which to hire a real police force or provide regular law courts, and its authority rested only on the charter of the Hudson's Bay Company. The deed of 1811 did not give the right of government along with the ownership of the land. This was a kind of authority which free British subjects did not like.

After the sixth Earl of Selkirk came of age, he sold back to the company in 1834 all his interests in the district of Assiniboia. Now that the company was once more owner of the land, it tried to put more strength into the government. By rebuilding Fort Garry of stone in 1835, it hoped to create a feeling of authority and power. But this was not enough. Without money, a government is helpless. Therefore, the company provided a revenue by imposing a duty of seven and a half per cent on imports and exports. This was reduced later. A council of sixteen members, including the Roman Catholic bishop and other leading members of the community, was established, and it began to pass the laws that the colony needed. The settlement was divided into four districts, and a regular justice of the peace was appointed for each. A jail was built beside Fort Garry, and a military force of sixty men, each receiving a small salary, was organized under the sheriff to keep order. How far all this succeeded, we shall soon see.

## CHAPTER XIII

### *"The Old Order Changeth."*

At Fort Garry in 1836, a half-breed called Louis St. Denis was found guilty of stealing and was punished by being whipped in public. Many gathered round to look on, and soon the man who was doing the whipping began to feel uncomfortable. The crowd were calling him names and throwing mud at him. Later, he had to run for his life from the angry mob. There was something wrong with the government. What was it?

We respect our government and obey its laws, because we make our own government, and it protects us. But in the North-West at this time it was very different. The people had nothing to do with making the government, and some of them suspected that it was not trying to protect them so much as it was trying to protect the business of the company. The whole government of the country, from the governor and the council down, was appointed by the company. Therefore, it had to do what the company wanted. Sometimes this was what the people desired, and sometimes it was not.

One thing upon which the company insisted was that the settlers should not buy and sell furs. The charter, it will be remembered, gave the company a monopoly of the trade in this country, and now the company, through the government, tried to enforce this right. The result which followed was very natural. When the government sent men to poke poles up people's chimneys to find any furs which they might have hidden there, the settlers felt that the government was not their friend. When these men found furs, they seized them and punished those to whom the furs belonged. Then the government seemed to be the enemy of the settlers.

But how could this be? We have already seen that those who had furs could sell them only to the Hudson's Bay Company, because they had nowhere else to take them! This was all very true for a while, but now it was no longer true. Settlement in the United States was growing towards the border, and American fur traders came closer and closer. A number of them actually visited the Red River Settlement in 1844. Many men in the colony were now trading with the Indians



Adam Thom.

for furs and were selling them to the Americans. Carts loaded with furs would gather on a dark mid-night and steal away for the border, which was only sixty miles off. It was easy to make money in this way, and it was quite exciting. Sometimes the smugglers were chased, and, if they were caught, the furs were confiscated. Soon this running of furs became very common.

The half-breeds were much more irritated than the white settlers when the government or the company, which was really the same thing, tried to stop the smuggling. This was for two reasons. One was that the Métis were greater smugglers. The other was that their cousins, the Indians, were quite free to sell their own furs across the border. The half-breeds did not see why they should not have the same right.

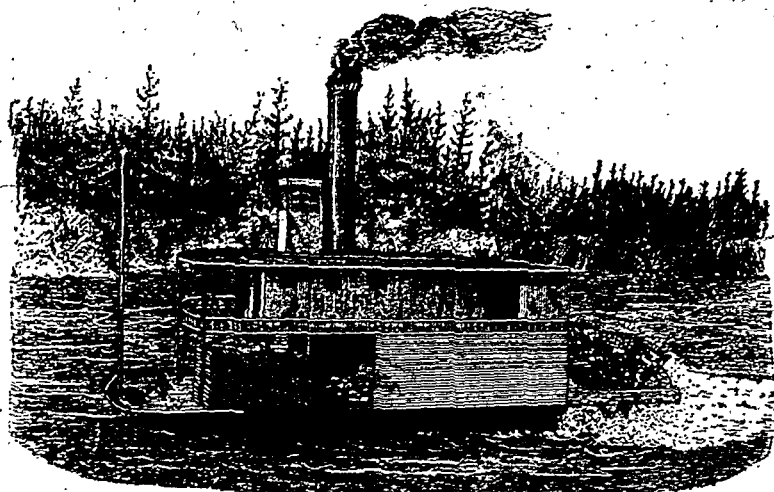
Their hatred of the government was made much worse by one man, Adam Thom, who came to the settlement in 1839 to be its recorder, or judge. Though he had been a Montreal lawyer and journalist, he did not know any French, the language of more than half the people. Worse than that,

Thom had been the bitter enemy of the discontented French-speaking Canadians during the recent Papineau rebellion in Lower Canada. The French half-breeds had heard about this and were sure that he was their enemy too. This was very unfortunate. There could not be any respect for the law when the chief judge was the enemy, or thought to be the enemy, of the majority of the people.

Nor did the English-speaking half-breeds hate the government any less. The government was their enemy in trying to stop them from fur smuggling. An interesting story is told to explain how they came to be very closely united with the French half-breeds. A Hudson's Bay Company officer left his daughters at Fort Garry to be educated. Two men fell in love with one of them. One suitor was a Highlander; the other was a Scottish half-breed. She preferred the latter, but her proud father insisted that she marry the other. Thereupon the Highlander cursed his rival as a dirty half-breed, who had no business to think of marrying such a fine lady. According to the story, the English-speaking half-breeds took this as an insult to themselves, and thereupon felt as never before that they were really the same people as the French half-breeds.

In the spring of 1849, there occurred an incident that was not forgotten for many a long year. William Sayer, one of the French Métis who carried on a private trade in furs, bought some goods and set out for Lake Manitoba to trade. But instead of going to Lake Manitoba, he went to jail, for he and three of his companions were arrested after a stiff fight. The whole body of the Métis were angry at this imprisonment of four of their fellows. They became angrier still when the date of the trial was fixed, for it happened to fall on Ascension Day. Now this is a very holy day to all Roman Catholics, and the French Métis, who were mostly Roman Catholics, felt that it was intended as an insult to their religion.

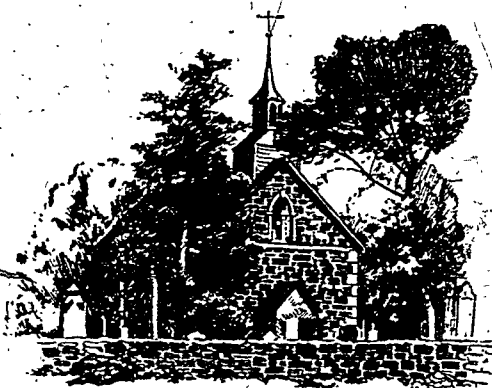
When the day came, hundreds of Métis gathered at St. Boniface. They stacked their guns outside the church while they went inside for service. After church, they had an exciting meeting. Louis Riel, a half-breed miller and the father of the rebel of later years, made a speech full of bitterness against the government for persecuting one of their number. Then they swarmed across the river and surrounded the court house, where the trial soon commenced. Though



The Anson Northrup.

Sayer admitted his guilt, the judge was helpless, for he was in the midst of an angry, armed mob. Louis Riel told him to his face that he had only one hour to set Sayer free. An excuse was found for releasing the prisoner, and the mob went wild with joy. They leaped about, they yelled, and they fired off their guns into the air. Pouring down to the river bank, they rowed back to St. Boniface, where they gave three cheers and fired three volleys. They had won a great victory. Trade was free at last; the company dared not stop it.

No longer did the carts have to steal away by night; they could now go in broad daylight. Therefore, the trade between the settlement and Minnesota grew enormously. In 1856, as many as five hundred Red River carts crossed the border with furs and other produce of the country. To check this growing loss of its business, the company could do only one thing. That was to follow the example of the many "free traders" and beat them over this new route. The company first used Red River carts, and then, in 1861, it placed a little stern-wheel steamer on the Red River, the *Anson Northrup*. The machinery was taken from an old Mississippi River boat and hauled overland from St. Paul. In 1862, a larger steamer took its place. This was the *International*, one hundred and fifty feet long by thirty feet wide. Because it was much cheaper to carry goods by steamer than by cart, the company recovered some of its lost advantage. ~~It might have gained more had the river been straighter and deeper.~~ Although this steamboat drew only three feet and a half, it often stuck in the bed of the winding stream when the water was low. Therefore, the company had still to use large numbers of carts.



The Presbyterian church at Kildonan.

The colony which was thus looking more and more to the south was different from the colony of thirty or forty years before. Instead of being concentrated near the forks, it had spread out along the rivers and now numbered more than

ten thousand souls. Up the Red for thirty miles lay a scattered community of French half-breeds, some of whom also lived on the southern shores of the Assiniboine. Down the Red, below Lower Fort Garry, lay St. Peter's, a village of Indians who were leading an agricultural and a Christian life under the guidance of an English Church clergyman. From St.



An early river pioneer.

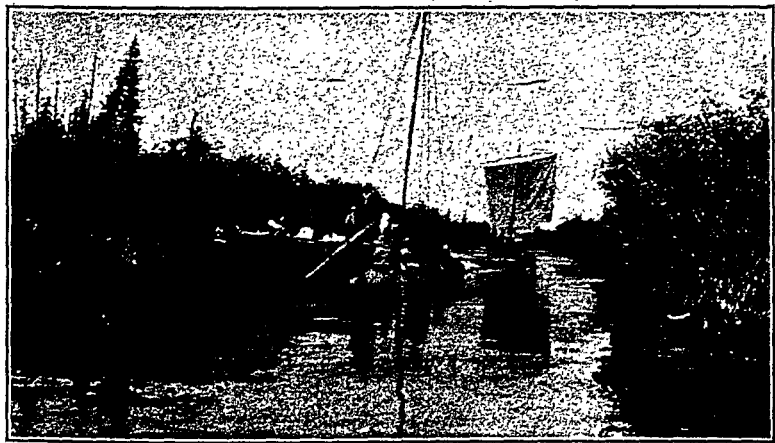
Peter's to Fort Garry and thence to Portage La Prairie, sixty-five miles up the Assiniboine, the English-speaking population stretched in a long line. Here and there, particularly towards the west, the thin line was broken, but at St. Andrew's, just above Lower Fort Garry, it was growing thick. Here agriculture was no longer clinging to the river bank, but was beginning to spread inland.

The French-speaking part of the population was less settled than the rest. Their chief occupations were buffalo hunting, working the company's brigades of boats, and freighting. By the hundred, they followed the hunt as they had been doing for many years, except that now they generally had to travel farther afield because the buffalo were growing scarce.

By the score, they left in June, manning the boat brigades which bore the colony's surplus produce to Norway House.



In 1821 this became the main centre whence food and the trading goods were distributed to the various posts scattered over the whole country, but now it was the centre of only the northern trade. With new cargoes, the boats plied up past Forts Cumberland and Ile à la Crosse to Methye Portage, where they met the brigades from the Athabaska and Mackenzie River region. Here they exchanged cargoes, and the boats from the Red River, now laden with furs, set



York boats on Echimamish River, a tributary of the Nelson.

out for York Factory. When they reached the bay, they again exchanged cargoes, taking on the goods that had just arrived from England. They delivered most of this freight at Norway House, and the rest they brought to Fort Garry, where it was used by the company or the settlers. For this trip, which lasted until October, the guide who had charge of a brigade received £35 and each man between £16 and £20. Seldom, however, did they see all this money, for usually they and their families spent most of it at the company's store before the work was actually done.

Of greater importance to the community was the freighting which employed nearly six hundred men. Every summer, a hundred "trippers" drove three hundred Red River carts over a well beaten trail five hundred miles to Fort Carlton and back. Fort Carlton was the centre of the company's business for the country through which the Saskatchewan River flowed, and what the brigades of boats were to the trade of the north country these trains of carts were to the trade of this country. Nearly five times as many men and carts carried furs and goods between Fort Garry and St. Paul. Five hundred of these carts set out regularly twice a year on this trip of six weeks. The first trip began early in the summer as soon as the prairie was dry enough and the grass grown enough to support the carts and the beasts that drew them. The autumn trip lasted from the end of August until October.

It was a great day in the community whenever a train departed. The carts were all gathered in the Hudson's Bay Company reserve of five hundred acres around Fort Garry, and many people came out to see the line set out. Men, women, and children shouting and hurrying hither and thither, dogs barking and dashing about, and ponies prancing, all caused a rather wild confusion for some hours. Then, as the carts filed out along the trail, the noise of excitement in the reserve died down, and the air was filled with the mournful creaking of the long train. It was such a wierd sound that those who were not Scots compared it with the bagpipes.

The English-speaking population was more purely agricultural and much more prosperous than it had been a generation before. Larger and more comfortable houses were built, and many of them had iron stoves instead of fireplaces. In place of parchment, glass was now being used for windows, and oil lamps were more common than candles had once been. Ploughs tilled the soil and windmills ground the grain. One enterprising individual had a sawmill at the mouth of the



Scenes along the Nelson River.  
 At top, Norway House; at bottom, Echimamish River.

Red River. A village was beginning to grow at the meeting of the trails that later grew into Main Street and Portage Avenue, Winnipeg. Another village was beginning on the former trail near Point Douglas, about where the C.P.R. station stands to-day. A few private merchants were succeeding in their business, and a hotel was entertaining guests in the former village. For the first time since the early days of the colony, some people were coming in from the outside world—from England, Canada, and the United States. In 1859, two Canadians who had just arrived, began the first newspaper in this country—the *Nor-Western*. All these things meant that the settlement as a whole was much better off.

This prosperity was partly due to the age of the colony. Much pioneering work had been done that did not have to be done over again. Also, though it had been slow, there had been a steady growth in numbers, and a larger population can support itself more easily than a smaller population. Prosperity was also coming to the colony because of its position, which was much more favourable than it had been. For many years, the main stream of trade had passed across the northern end of Lake Winnipeg on its way between the interior of the country and the shores of Hudson Bay. Now the approach of American railways was drawing this stream away from York Factory and down to St. Paul. Thus, instead of leaving the colony away to one side, it passed through it, and a stream of trade, like a stream of water, enriches the land through which it flows.

Like a boy who grows too big for his clothes, this colony was outgrowing its government. Some thought that it would get a new and better government if it were annexed to the United States. Others thought that it should get what it needed by being united to Canada. Still others thought that the best way to secure good government would be to make this

a regular British colony quite separate from Canada. As it neither came under the Stars and Stripes nor became a separate British colony, we need consider only how it came to be part of the Dominion. To understand this, however, we have to go back a little.

For a number of years, many people in the North-West were looking more and more to Canada, and at the same time many people in Canada were looking more and more towards the North-West. Why were they thus looking at one another and wishing to be united?

The reason for this feeling in the North-West was that some of the white settlers were becoming more and more discontented. They wanted to govern themselves, and they wanted to see great numbers of other settlers come in to take up lands and develop the country. They felt that, if only they were united to Canada, they would obtain these two things, freedom and prosperity, both of which seemed impossible under the rule of the fur company. In the winter of 1856-1857, nearly six hundred people signed a petition to the Canadian Legislative Assembly, praying that the country might be annexed. This yearning towards Canada grew stronger as a few Canadians began to trickle into the district. They told the other settlers that the country would go ahead by leaps and bounds, if it were a part of Canada and had its free government. For some time, the grumbling against the company had been only private talk among small knots of men who chanced to meet in the village store or street or in the farm houses. Now it was published broadcast in the *Nor'-Wester*. This paper said a great deal that it had no right to say and spread a sort of desperate feeling that conditions must change.

In Canada, too, there was an awakening. The few Canadians in the West wrote to their friends and relatives back home. They told them what a wonderful country it was—how rich was the land, how fine was the climate, and how

easy it was to break a farm where there was no forest to clear away. At the same time, they told how hard was the government of the company and how it had the people at its mercy. Of course, many of the charges which they made against the company were not true, but they made an impression upon those who read them. Some of these letters were printed in the Canadian newspapers, and people talked about them.

In the midst of their talk, the Canadians began to see a new vision,—the vision of a country much greater than they had yet dreamed of. It came quite suddenly in 1856, like a great inspiration, or like a western springtime. When one of the leading members of the government announced that the western boundary of Canada should be the Pacific Ocean, all the papers and all the people began to talk about it. There was great excitement in the land. Canada began to want the great North-West and to want it very badly. It would make her ever so much richer and greater. Indeed, she would never be able to grow very much unless she had it for her own. Therefore, she must have it.

At the same time something very important was happening over in England. People there were also beginning to think about this great territory. Some years before this, a half-breed boy was born up in Cumberland House. His father, an officer of the company, sent him home to Scotland to be educated. In 1837, when he was just fifteen, he returned to the land of his birth. There he remained for a few years until he went back to Scotland to attend university. Then he became a schoolmaster in London and not long afterwards began to practise law. This man, Alexander K. Isbister, was a brilliant fellow who never forgot his half-breed brethren and their grievances. He wrote letter after letter to the British government and to different public men in England telling them of these grievances and complaining against the rule of the company. These letters from an intelligent man,

who was a native of the country, made many think that there might be something wrong out in Rupert's Land. More than any one else, Isbister stirred people in England to believe that there ought to be an investigation into all the doings of the company.

At last, early in 1857, the British House of Commons appointed a committee to make this investigation. For six months the committee was quite busy. It called all sorts of people to tell what they knew about conditions in this country. It was almost like a trial of the company. The committee inquired into everything from the giving of alcohol to the Indians to the nature of the soil and the character of the climate. The company did not wish to lose the country where it had such a valuable fur trade, and, therefore, several of its officials said that it could never become a real farming country, because the soil was poor and the climate bad. But others insisted that this was not true, and that the land was capable of supporting a large agricultural population. The committee concluded that "such territory as may be useful for settlement," particularly the "districts of the Red River and the Saskatchewan," should be "ceded to Canada on equitable principles." In other words, the prairie country *ought* to belong to Canada.

A dozen years now passed before Canada actually gained possession of this territory. Why this long delay when Canada wanted the country and Britain believed that she should have it? Canada herself was partly to blame. She acted rather like a spoiled child. She demanded it right away and tried to get it for nothing. She argued that the prairie never belonged to the company, but that it had always belonged to Canada from the days of the French explorers. She said that the charter was no good, and that, if it gave the company anything, it was only a strip of land lying next to Hudson Bay.

Even before the British parliamentary committee reached a conclusion, Canada had sent men to spy out the land. They left Toronto in July, 1857, and from Fort William they passed over the old fur traders' route, reaching Fort Garry in September. In the next year, their work really began. S. J. Dawson was the surveyor of the party, and Professor Henry Youle Hind was the geologist. They travelled over a good deal of what is now Manitoba and Saskatchewan and reported to the



The interior of Fort Garry.

Canadian government what they saw—a truly wonderful country. Their reports made Canada more anxious than ever to include the country within its bounds. But the Hudson's Bay Company still held it, and this made Canada very impatient with the company.

The company, on the other hand, was very annoyed with Canada. What right had Canada to send men like Dawson and Hind into lands that did not belong to her? What right had Canada to question the charter, which had stood for nearly two hundred years? The company was responsible



for preserving law and order in the North-West, but how could it do this when the Canadians, who had already settled there were destroying all respect for the government of the country by their continuous and bitter attacks? The *Nor'-Wester*, managed by Canadians, was particularly dangerous. More than once it stirred up crowds to break open the prison and release men who were very properly in jail. It seemed as if the Canadians were trying to cheat the company out of its rights.

It was very unfortunate that Canada and the Hudson's Bay Company suspected each other as enemies. So long as the company thought that Canada was trying to destroy it, and Canada thought that the company was trying to stop her growth, no good could follow. It was necessary for them to look at things in a more reasonable way before they could reach any satisfactory agreement. When the old colony of Canada was divided into Ontario and Quebec and united with New Brunswick and Nova Scotia to form the Dominion of Canada in 1867, a new day dawned for the West. In the larger country of the Dominion, men began to see farther than when they were separated in a number of smaller colonies. Also, the mother country was very anxious to see the new Dominion succeed, and, therefore, was more willing to urge the company to give what Canada wanted.

For these reasons, one of the first results of the federation of Canada was the addition of the North-West to the new Dominion. A bargain was struck in 1869. The Hudson's Bay Company agreed to give up all its rights under the charter—its monopoly of trade, its ownership of the land, and its authority to govern. Canada was to pay the company £300,000, to give it blocks of land around its trading posts, and one-twentieth of the land in the "fertile belt," that is, of all the land lying south of the North Saskatchewan from the mountains to Lake Winnipeg and the Lake of the Woods.

Canada was also to allow the company to continue as any ordinary trading company. The whole territory was to be handed over by the company to the British government, and then the British government was to turn it over to Canada on December 1st, 1869.

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## CHAPTER XIV

### *How the first Riel Rebellion produced the Province of Manitoba.*

A very proud man was travelling through the United States from Canada on his way to the Red River in the fall of 1869. He was hurrying to arrive at Fort Garry as early as possible, because he was to get everything ready to govern the territory before it actually became part of Canada on December 1st. He was to govern it for Canada, and he was taking with him a number of men who were to help him. This was William McDougall, whom Canada had appointed the first lieutenant-governor of the North-West Territories, as the country was now to be called.

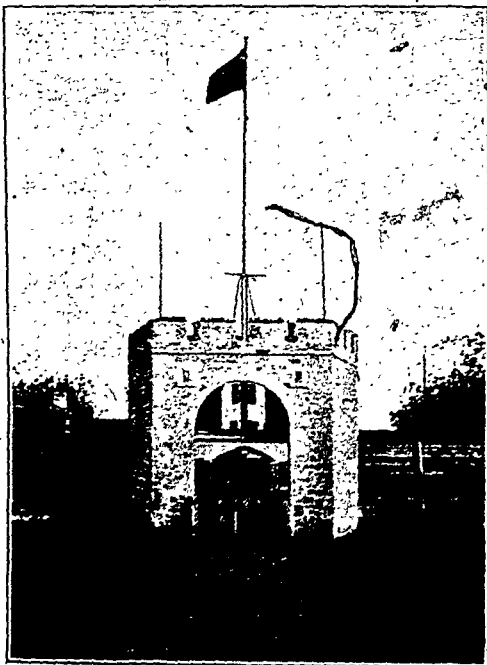
From St. Paul, Minnesota, where the railway then ended, he travelled by road over the open prairie and on October 30th arrived at the Hudson's Bay Company's post at Pembina. He had just entered the territory which he had come to govern, but he was not to remain there long, nor was he ever to govern it. Almost at once he received a written order to keep out, and on November 3rd, a party of men forced him to leave. They escorted him across the line to American soil, and there he had to stay, an angry as well as a proud man. What was the matter?

A rebellion had broken out on the banks of the Red River, and for this Canada was very much to blame. It had bought the territory from the Hudson's Bay Company, but had paid no attention to the people living there, although they were the ones who were most interested in what was happening. They now numbered between eleven and twelve thousand.

Of these, fifteen hundred were white people, five hundred were Indians who had abandoned their wandering habits and settled down, and nearly ten thousand were half-breeds, more than half of whom were French. Among this population, Canada had once possessed many friends, but now she had lost

the sympathy of the greater number of the people.

After failing to secure the country from the Hudson's Bay Company, Canada had for a while turned her back upon the West. Thereupon, most of the white people turned their backs upon Canada and began to look for another solution of their problem. They wished the British government to make the country a self-governing colony. When their hearts



The gateway of Fort Garry.

and minds were set upon this, they learned that Canada was to have the country after all, and the rumor spread that Canada was not going to give them what they wanted most of all—the right to govern themselves. More serious still was the attitude of the Métis.

In the days of Lord Selkirk, it will be remembered, a number of Canadians had taught the half-breeds that this country was really theirs, and the half-breeds had never forgotten the

lesson. Now it seemed to them that they were being sold with the country, just as cattle are sometimes sold with a farm. Therefore, they disliked the company which had sold them and Canada which had bought them. They were afraid of what Canada was going to do with them, and this was very natural. They knew that the Canadians who were in the country looked down upon them and often made fun of them. They knew that these Canadians wanted thousands and thousands of other Canadians to come up and take farms there. The idea frightened them.

No one explained to them that Canada intended to treat them fairly, and they saw some things which made them fear that she would not. In the fall of 1868, Canada sent a man to survey a road from the Red River to the Lake of the Woods. He hired people from the settlement and paid them very small wages. Also some of the men who came with him from Canada began to "stake off" large tracts of land for themselves and their friends back home. This made the Métis, who had no title deeds of any kind, suspect that the Canadians were going to come in and rob them of their lands.

Of all the Métis, the French were the most alarmed. They feared something more than the loss of their lands. They were afraid that as subjects of Canada they would not have the same rights as English and Protestant people. When the French in Canada had agreed to form part of the new Dominion, they had insisted upon certain laws to protect their religion and their language against the English and Protestant majority. But nothing like that was being done, so far as they could see, for the five or six thousand people on the Red River who spoke French as their native tongue and were all Roman Catholics.

Canada was really very stupid, although she had plenty of warning. In June, 1869, Bishop Taché, who had succeeded Bishop Provencher at Red River, passed through Ottawa on his way to a great council of his church in Rome, and he

told the government that there would be trouble if Canada were not careful. Many others also reported that most of the population were very suspicious of Canada, but the government would not listen to them.

Just after Bishop Taché's visit, the government ordered Colonel Dennis to go to the Red River and begin a general survey of the country, laying it out in townships for settlement. Dennis replied that it would be dangerous to do this until



Louis Riel.

the Métis were satisfied that their lands would not be touched, but the Minister of Public Works told him to go ahead as he was ordered. He obeyed. But, when he got out to the North-West, he was not able to work very long. Within a week, a dozen and a half French Métis led by Louis Riel, a son of the miller, stopped him and his men by standing on their surveying chain and threatening them with violence if they continued. The Métis were now sure that their suspicions

were true—that Canada was going to steal their lands, —and they were desperate.

At the same time, the Canadian government did other foolish things. Instead of asking the people how they wished to be governed, it made its own plan for governing them and gave them no inkling of it. The earlier suggestion that the Territories should govern themselves was not to be put into effect for some time. In the meantime they were to be governed by a lieutenant-governor who would receive his orders from Ottawa. And who was this lieutenant-governor, William McDougall? Was he fitted for the task?

If Canada had desired to stir up a rebellion in the North-West, she could not have picked a better man. He did not know the West at all, but the West knew him only too well. He was a member of the Canadian government which most of the people on the Red River were suspecting more and more of being their enemy. Any member of this government would have been bad, but any member other than McDougall would have been better. More than any one else in the East, he had insisted for years that Canada must own this country. He had been the chief Canadian enemy of the Hudson's Bay Company, and, therefore, every past and present employee of the company disliked him, and there were hundreds of these in the settlement. Worse still, he was the very Minister of Public Works who had ordered Colonel Dennis to go ahead with his surveys. To the half-breeds he was the man who most wanted to rob them of their lands.

The appearance of Colonel Dennis and the news of McDougall's appointment were like a match applied to gunpowder. The French Métis all went wild with excitement. They held meetings, where young Louis Riel talked a great deal, and they formed what they called a "National Committee of Métis" with Riel as secretary. The first thing which this committee did was to order McDougall to keep out of the country, and the next was to make him leave. At the same time, Riel appeared at the gate of Fort Garry with a number of armed followers. Dr. Cowan, who had charge of the fort, asked what they came for, and was told that they had come to guard it. Dr. Cowan objected, but Riel insisted and took command of the place.

Louis Riel at this time was a young man of twenty-five. When only fourteen, he had been such a bright pupil in the little St. Boniface school that Bishop Taché had sent him to be educated in the Montreal Seminary. The bishop hoped to make him a priest, but, at the end of nine years, he found that

he was not fit for it at all. Though very clever, Riel was thoroughly unreliable. No one knew what mad thing he would try next. Therefore, he left the seminary and returned home in 1867. There his superior education and great eloquence quickly made him a leader of the French Métis, who were becoming alarmed by the talk of being sold to Canada. In his later years, Riel was more than once insane, but at this time he was only a vain and hot-headed young fellow who was determined to run everything. And he did run everything for some months, first as secretary of the Métis committee or council, and from the end of the year as the president of the rebel government.

Some have tried to blame the Hudson's Bay Company for the rebellion by saying that the company should have kept the people quiet and prepared them for the time when Canada would take over the country. But this is nonsense. We have already seen that the company had less and less authority over the people. When the rebellion broke out, it had none, for the half-breed population believed that the company had sold them like so many sheep. Besides, the company had no way of telling how Canada intended to treat the country and its people. It was Canada's business to tell them this, and she had neglected it. Finally, Governor McTavish of the Hudson's Bay Company was lying helpless, a dying man, in Fort Garry.

While McDougall was fuming across the border, Riel was master of the settlement. His men patrolled the streets of the little village of Winnipeg and arrested all who would not submit to his authority; they opened the mails; they took McDougall's baggage and furniture, which Riel used to furnish his rooms in Fort Garry; they seized and ate a lot of provisions belonging to the Canadian government; and they broke open the company's stores and safe.

On December 1st, McDougall began issuing proclamations asserting his authority, but this did more harm than good.



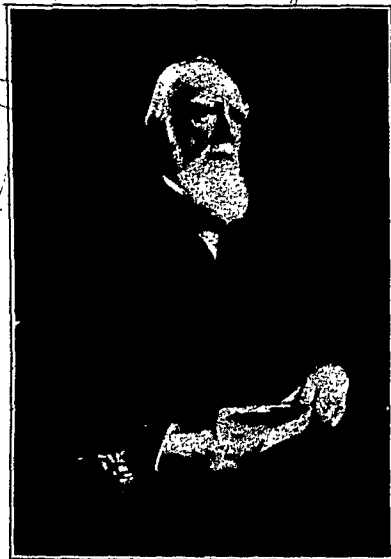
Hearing of the troubles on the Red River, the Canadian government had already refused to pay over the £300,000 which it had promised, and at the same time refused to take over the country until all was quiet there. Thus, when McDougall was asserting his authority, he had none at all. This was soon known in the settlement, and it made Riel more powerful than ever. There was no other possible authority in the land. McDougall now went back to Canada.

Having stirred up the rebellion, Canada began to see what terrible mistakes she had made, and she turned to undo them. The first thing was to persuade the people on the Red River that Canada was not their enemy, as many believed, but that she wished to treat them fairly. Had she attempted to do this in the beginning, it might not have been very hard. But now it was extremely difficult, because the French half-breeds under Riel were more excited than ever. Anything that Canada did, they were ready to suspect as a trick to conquer them.

Two days after Christmas, a traveller from the East arrived at the open gate of Fort Garry. Several armed men on guard stopped him until Riel was fetched, and then he was conducted within. He was a special agent of the Canadian government, and Canada could not have chosen a better man. He had joined the Hudson's Bay Company more than thirty years before and had risen to the top of its service. He knew the country and its people. He knew what to do and how to do it, and he did it. More than any one else he quieted the rebellion, and, when it was over, he was the first member of the Dominion Parliament elected in Winnipeg. This was Donald A. Smith, who later became Lord Strathcona.

For nearly two months, Riel kept him practically a prisoner, although he did not confine him along with the sixty others who were already in Fort Garry. Many people were allowed to visit and talk with him, and he took advantage of this.

He told them that Canada was very anxious to deal honestly and squarely with all men, and that those misguided people who had rebelled would not be punished. Gradually people began to feel calmer and to wonder if they had not been rather foolish. Riel was no longer able to do just as he wished. Some of his own close followers were now more ready to listen to Donald A. Smith than to him.



Donald A. Smith, Lord Strathcona.

After a fortnight, Riel suddenly appeared in Smith's room and asked to see his commission, that is, the letter showing that he was really appointed by the Canadian government and given power to speak for it. Smith did not have it; he had left it behind for safe keeping with another man on the American side of the border. Had he brought it all the way with him, Riel might have seized it, and then Smith would have been powerless. When Smith told him this, Riel seemed a little ex-

cited and confused, saying, "Yes I know 'tis a great pity, but how soon could you have it?" "Probably in five or six days," Smith replied. Riel demanded a written order for one of his messengers to get it. Smith refused. He added that he would not send for his commission and other documents from the government, until he could be sure that he would actually get them and would be allowed to read them to the people at a general meeting of the community. At last Riel promised him these two things, and Smith sent off his brother-in-law, Richard

Hardisty, to bring them. Between two and three o'clock next morning, Smith was wakened by Riel and an armed guard standing by his bed. Again Riel demanded a written order for him to get the papers, and again Smith refused.

As the English-speaking people refused to support Riel, he had fewer than half the population at his back and, therefore, was not sure of his position. He feared that he might lose what authority he had if Smith should get his papers and read them to the people. That was why he now determined to take them himself. Setting out with a few men, he met



Main Street, Winnipeg, 1870, looking north.

Hardisty on his way back with the papers and demanded that he hand them over. But Hardisty was accompanied by about seventy French half-breeds who were friends of Smith. One of them put a pistol to Riel's head and told him to mind his own business. That morning, Smith had his papers in his own hands, and the next day he brought them to the meeting of the people which Riel had promised to hold.

Over a thousand people gathered on January 19th, 1870, for the meeting which was to be the turning point of the rebellion. There was no building large enough to hold them, and, therefore, they met in the open air. Though it was bitterly cold, 20° below zero, the crowd listened most carefully to what Smith had to say. After a short speech, he read his

commission and messages from the governor-general and from the queen. Then the meeting adjourned until the next day, when Smith continued to read other documents, all of which showed that the Canadian government was eager to satisfy the wishes of the population as far as possible. At the close of the reading, Riel moved that twenty men representing the English settlers and twenty representing the French be elected to meet and decide just what they wanted. The motion was carried, and the meeting broke up with all in the best of spirits. French and English shook hands, and they cheered and threw their caps up in the air.

After a few days, the forty delegates were elected and came together in a meeting which drew up a list of demands, called the Bill of Rights. Speaking for the Canadian government, Smith replied to these demands. He could not give a definite "yes" to every one, but he announced that the Canadian government invited the inhabitants to send delegates to Ottawa to settle the whole business there. Three were chosen, Judge Black, an Englishman, Father Ritchot, a priest from France, and Alfred Scott, an American.

At last Canada was doing what she should have done at first. She was going to treat the people of the North-West like other Canadians. When Canada, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia formed the Dominion, they were not forced to join against their will. Their representatives insisted that the new provinces should have certain rights before they would agree to become part of the Dominion. Now the representatives of the Red River Settlement travelled to Ottawa with their Bill of Rights and talked the whole matter over with the Canadian government. Soon they agreed on what should be done, and the Canadian government did it.

On May 2nd, 1870, Sir John A. Macdonald introduced into the House of Commons a bill creating the province of Manitoba, and it was passed within a fortnight. Those who

lived in Manitoba were to govern themselves as did the other people of Canada. The rebellion had succeeded. Under Riel's leadership, the French Métis had won freedom for Manitoba.

Meanwhile, Riel continued to govern the settlement. While in control he committed a great crime which was to rest like a curse upon this country. We have seen that there were over sixty prisoners in Fort Garry when Smith arrived. They were Englishmen and Canadians whom Riel had arrested, because he was afraid of them. In the middle of February, he released a few, but kept the rest locked up. The English-speaking people in Portage la Prairie determined to force Riel to free them all, and somewhere between sixty and a hundred men marched down the Assiniboine to the Red River. They tried to get others to join them to compel Riel to do what they wanted. He knew what was happening and decided to open the prison, all the prisoners agreeing to remain quietly at home.

As there was no need to do anything more, the men from Portage la Prairie turned to go home. They might have all reached home safely, if they had taken the right road. There were two roads, one to the north, which they should have followed, and one to the south, which passed close by Fort Garry. Now Riel had received quite a scare when these men came down the Assiniboine, and he may have received another when they seemed to be marching against his headquarters. Immediately a party of his men rode out on horseback to stop them. The English were on foot or in sledges, and, therefore, nearly fifty of them were caught and carried prisoners into the fort, where their leader, Major Boulton, was put in chains. He and three others were sentenced to be shot. Everybody who had any influence in the community now pleaded with Riel not to do such an insane thing. Riel granted the lives of the other three, but firmly said that Boulton must die. He would have been killed right away,

if Smith had not persuaded Riel to stop the execution. Smith did it by promising to induce the English-speaking settlers to work with Riel.

It often happens that a man trying to do one thing does the very opposite. Riel was a good example of this. He was afraid that he would lose his power, and, by trying to frighten the people into obedience, he turned them against him. He had no sooner got over his alarm caused by the Portage la Prairie men than another fear took hold of him, and this led him to his crime.

Away off in Rome, Bishop Taché had heard of the troubles on the banks of the Red River. The great council which he had come to attend was just opening, but he turned his back upon it and hastened home across the Atlantic, offering himself to the Canadian government to be used in stilling the troubles in the West. As he was hurrying back to his flock, the news of his coming flew ahead of him, and this was what frightened Riel anew. The young rebel saw visions of his people running away from him and following their shepherd whom they so much loved and trusted. Therefore, thinking to show his authority, he struck out recklessly and committed murder.

At eleven o'clock in the morning of March 4th, 1870, the Reverend George Young, a Methodist missionary who had arrived from the East two years before, rushed into Smith's room and told him that one of the prisoners was to be shot at noon. He was Thomas Scott, a bold youth who loved to play tricks on people and call them names. He had particularly irritated Riel and his guards. Smith hurried off to plead with Riel for the young man's life, but Riel would not listen.

Scott thought that they were only trying to frighten him, until a number of guards entered his cell at noon and ordered him out. He was blindfolded and led out of the postern gate.

for a few yards. Then he knelt in the snow while Young prayed for him. The firing party discharged their muskets, and three balls passed through his body. These did not kill him, however, and one of the men came forward and shot him through the head as he lay moaning on the white ground. An empty coffin was buried in the Fort Garry courtyard, but the body was never found. It was secretly dropped through a hole in the ice on the river.

Four days afterwards, Bishop Taché arrived and quieted the minds of his people. Riel now began releasing his prisoners. He saw that the country was certain to become part of Canada. Therefore, on April 20th, he ordered the Union Jack to be hoisted at Fort Garry instead of the rebel government's flag composed of the lilies of France and a shamrock. The shamrock had been put in to please the Fenian O'Donoghue, a member of Riel's government. O'Donoghue hated Britain and the British flag. When it went up, he straightway pulled it down. There was almost a fight between the two leaders, but Riel had his way, and the Union Jack went up to stay. Some days afterwards, O'Donoghue tried to run up the Stars and Stripes, as he wished to see the country annexed to the United States. But again Riel stopped him. This time he placed a man at the foot of the flagstaff, with orders to shoot any one who tried to lower the Union Jack.



Bishop Taché.

Meanwhile twelve hundred soldiers under Colonel Wolseley were on their way west to make sure that law and order would be observed. From Collingwood they sailed to Fort William,

and from there they followed the old fur traders' route over Rainy Lake, down the Winnipeg River, and up the Red River. On the morning of August 24th, they marched from Point Douglas through torrents of rain and a sea of mud. The gates of Fort Garry were open, and, as they entered, Riel and a few of his friends went out on the other side and slipped across the Assiniboine to seek a refuge in the United States. The rebellion was over, and the province of Manitoba was born.

The rebellion had been almost bloodless, thanks to the wise restraint of the English-speaking settlers; but the murder of Scott left bitter memories that could not be forgotten. This was one of the greatest tragedies in Canadian history, and perhaps the central tragedy in the history of the Canadian North-West. Had it not been for this crime, there might have been no second Riel Rebellion, and Louis Riel might have gone down in history as a hero of constitutional government instead of a criminal whose hands were stained with blood.



## CHAPTER XV

### *Red Coats and Red Men.*

When Canada took possession of this country, it was really the red man's land. The only white settlers in the North-West lived in the new province of Manitoba, which was much smaller then than it is now. Indeed, for some years it was called the "postage stamp province," because it looked like a little postage stamp on the big map of Canada. Even in this little district, the only occupied lands lay along the two rivers. From Portage la Prairie to the Rocky Mountains, hundreds of miles away, the only white men to be found were in the Hudson's Bay Company's posts, which were sprinkled over the country, and a few isolated missionaries. The rest of the population, except for some hundred half-breeds, was Indian and numbered about thirty-five thousand.

The Indians were like troublesome children, but the Hudson's Bay Company was a wise father to them. This was the first civilizing influence among them. The second was the work of the missionaries, which began seriously about 1840.

In this year, the Reverend James Evans came to Norway House to superintend the labours of a little company of Methodist missionaries. He died in 1846, but his work is still going on, for he conquered one of the greatest difficulties that civilized men face when they try to help uncivilized people. The latter cannot read, and the process of learning is too long and painful for any but a very rare individual to succeed. But Evans, after studying the Cree language carefully, worked out a system of writing which was so simple that an ordinary Indian in a fortnight could learn to read anything in his own tongue.

This remarkable Englishman wanted to begin printing right away, though he had no printing press, no ink, and no paper. Therefore, with his pocket knife, he carved the type out of lead which he secured from tea chests, he made ink with soot, and he used birch bark. His great invention was soon known and appreciated in England, and he was then sent a good press, well-made type, and a plentiful supply of ink and paper.



The Rev. James Evans.

The result was that missionaries could now put in the hands of the Indians portions of the Bible and other literature which they could read with their own eyes. Thus the good influence of western civilization was able to spread to those whom white men could not reach personally.

No less famous was Father Lacombe who reached Fort Edmonton in the fall of 1852. From that day to this, in that part of the North-West which later became Alberta, his name has been a household word among all shades of people from darkest red to purest white. In founding the settlement of St. Albert in 1862, he left an abiding memorial of his love for the Métis whom he rescued from a shiftless, wandering life. But there is no such material monument of his greatest work. Wandering up and down the land from tribe to tribe, he won countless red men from savagery. When they were dying like flies of typhoid, scarlet fever, and small pox, he nursed them tenderly, and many loved him more than anyone else on earth. When Crees and Blackfeet, deadly foes, met, and blood began to flow, his presence stilled the strife.

These are only two of the many missionaries of various

churches, men and women, who faced untold hardships and really laid down their lives to lift the lives of the red and half-breed population. Had it not been for them, there would have been much less peace and morality in this country.

The time was coming, however, when all the efforts of the company and of the missionaries could not have kept the red men in hand, for wicked white men were now appearing in their midst. One of these was Ambrose Fisher. As a boy he was educated at Point Douglas. There he learned the language of the Crees, and immediately on leaving school he began to trade with them, settling in the Qu'Appelle valley. It took him most of the summer to trek down to St. Paul, Minnesota, where he bought his supplies. In one year he made over \$16,000 by giving the Indians whiskey for their buffalo robes.

All along the border, right out to the Rockies, traders were coming across with wagons and carts loaded with the deadly drink. Unlike the honourable Hudson's Bay Company, these men did not care what they did to the Indians so long as they could get their furs. Like the traders from Canada a hundred years before, they threatened to ruin the country. Their liquor turned the red men into mad men, who fought and



Father Lacombe.

killed one another as they had never done before. Scalps were becoming almost as common as furs. Whenever two tribes chanced to meet, they were likely to fly at each other's throats. Sometimes they met at a Hudson's Bay Company's post, where they had come to trade. Then the men of the fort would have to lock themselves in, while the natives fought out their quarrel outside the walls until one side drove the other away. The Indians were becoming so dangerous that the buffalo hunters from Manitoba, brave and sturdy as they were, did not dare to go out on the western plains, unless they went in large companies and heavily armed.

Most of these whiskey traders from south of the border were desperate characters. They thought nothing of shooting a man, red or white, if they did not like him. In 1873, a party of them did a terrible thing just forty miles north of the border. It was in the Cypress Hills on what is now the boundary between Alberta and Saskatchewan. They were searching for Indians who had stolen some of their horses, and there they came upon the village of the thieves. When the red men refused to give up the horses, the white men swore vengeance. From the shelter of a near-by river bank they fired volley after volley into the village of the helpless natives. About forty were killed, many more were wounded, and only a few escaped in the hills. This Cypress Hills massacre was the most famous of many exploits of these white devils. Canada was going to have a real "Wild West," just like the United States, unless she put an end to this lawlessness right away. She did.

In this very year, the North-West Mounted Police were organized. No body of police in all the world is more famous than this which made our North-West a law-abiding country. The force was recruited in the East, and from the beginning the government realized that it must not be composed of ordinary men, but of young men with good education, strong

bodies, and bold spirits. There was no difficulty in filling up this little corps of three hundred picked men. The pay was small, but the call of an adventurous life in the wilds of the West was very great. To make sure that they had the right men, the officers tried to frighten the recruits by telling them of the terrible trials that they would have to face far away from home and civilization. Indeed, they were to live in daily company with death.

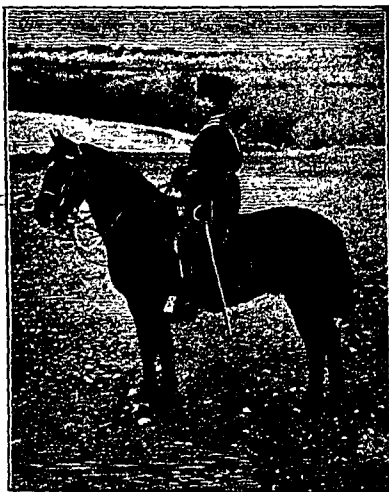
The first hundred and fifty came up that autumn over the "Dawson route," where they often had to make their own road. They spent the winter in Lower Fort Garry drilling like slaves. Except when the thermometer dropped to 36° below zero, they were at it from dawn until dark. Their most important business was to learn how to break and ride wild bronchos. Many was the violent fall on the hard frozen ground, but in the spring these men were masters of the strong art of horsemanship.

The second half of the force followed in the summer of 1874, coming over the railroad to its end at Fargo, North Dakota. They brought the more cumbersome baggage necessary for the life of the force out in the wilds. The Fargo people were amused to see acres of ground strewn with pieces of wagons and parts of saddles that had been shipped from England. Their amusement quickly changed to astonishment when these men got everything in perfect shape and set out on their northward march within twenty-four hours. These were men who could do the impossible.

The two halves of the force met at Dufferin on the Canadian side of the border just across from Pembina, and there they had their first western adventure during a terrific electric storm. It was a stampede of the horses, and was well described by one of the sergeant-majors who later rose to command the force and still later became Major-General Sir Sam Steele.

"A thunder-bolt fell in the midst of the horses. Terrified,

they broke their fastenings, and made for the side of the corral. The six men on guard were trampled under foot as they tried to stop them. The maddened beasts overturned the huge wagons, dashed through a row of tents, scattered everything, and made for the gate of the large field in which we were encamped. In their mad efforts to pass they climbed over one another to the height of many feet. I had full view of



Major Sam Steele.

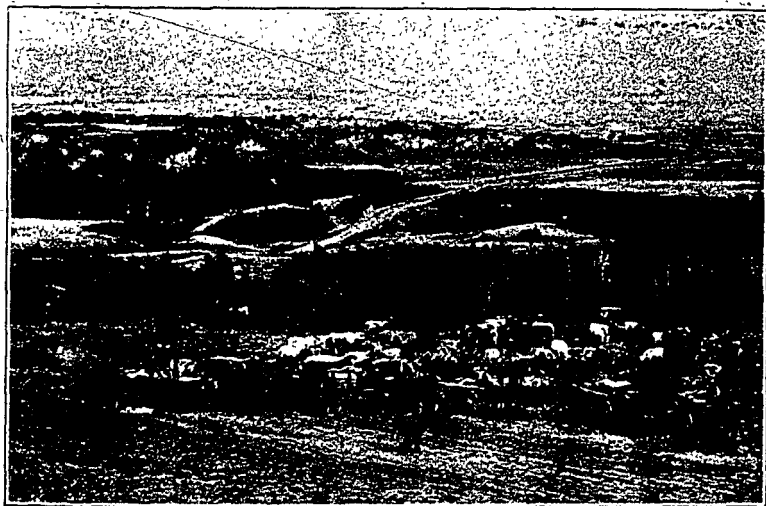
the stampede, being not more than fifty yards from the horses as they rushed at the gate and attempted to pass it, scrambling and rolling over one another in one huge mass. One of the inspectors jumped on a horse and chased after the wild animals for over fifty miles across the border. In twenty-four hours riding, he rounded them up and brought them all back."

This terrifying experience in the middle of the night had one good effect. In spite of many warnings, a few weaklings were among the recruits. They now saw that the life of the North-West Mounted Police was not for them, and they quietly departed. The rest were glad to be rid of them.

The Commissioner, or commander, of the Police, was an able Irishman, Colonel George A. French, at that time on the staff of the Royal Military College at Kingston. Later he served in other parts of the Empire, becoming a major-general and a knight. Very quickly, he had everything ready for the invasion of the wilderness, and on July 10th, 1874, the

North-West Mounted Police set out on their thousand-mile march across the uninhabited plain.

The procession must have been a wonderful sight. First came the three hundred men in their uniforms of scarlet, gold, and blue. They were in six divisions or troops called by the first letters of the alphabet from "A" to "F", and each troop was mounted on horses of one colour. They also had several field guns and mortars. But this was only the beginning.



Fort Qu'Appelle.

These men were to live far away from all settlement and, therefore, had to take with them all the means of supporting themselves. Thus the rest of the cavalcade was made up of nearly two hundred wagons and Red River carts, with all kinds of agricultural implements and a whole army of cattle.

Their line of march was straight west along the border. There was a definite purpose in following this route. It was to strike at the lawlessness that was coming up from the south.

They all kept together for three hundred miles until they reached La Roche Percée (pierced rock) on the Souris River between the present towns of Estevan and North Portal, where one division struck off to the north. These men went by Fort Ellice at the mouth of the Qu'Appelle, up the Assiniboine, across country to Fort Carlton on the North Saskatchewan in the middle of its northward sweep to Prince Albert, and on to Fort Edmonton, where they arrived at the end of October. The last part of the journey was one of great hardships. Pasture was very poor that year, and the weakened horses nearly gave out when the cold weather caught them in October. The men frequently had to lift them from the ground and rub their joints before they could proceed. But, once in Fort Edmonton, the warm hospitality of the Hudson's Bay Company made both men and horses rejoice.

Meanwhile, the main body pushed on to the foot-hills in what is now Southern Alberta, where the chief danger lay. There Colonel French left three divisions under Colonel MacLeod, the Assistant Commissioner, and returned with the remaining two to take up his headquarters on the Swan River. Unfortunately, the barracks there were not ready, and a prairie fire had destroyed the wild hay. Therefore, he left only one division in that part of the country—at Fort Pelly on the Assiniboine—and set out with the other for Dufferin, the original starting-point. He finished his two-thousand-mile march in November with the thermometer standing 30° below zero.

Colonel MacLeod with his three divisions was in the most dangerous position of all. They were in the midst of the most warlike tribes of the West and in the favourite country of the most lawless traders who came up from Fort Benton in Montana. They were out in the open, hundreds of miles from the nearest Hudson's Bay Company's post, and winter was at hand. On November 1st, a blizzard struck them, and the temperature sank to 1° below zero. MacLeod's first care



was for the horses. "When the storm broke," he wrote, "I had all the horses driven into the shelter of the woods near by; every one blanketed and fed with oats and corn." Until the poor beasts were stabled, not a log was laid for the men's quarters. The officers were the last to be housed. In December, three of them were still in a tent in the woods.

Thus was Fort MacLeod built in the closing months of 1874, the first permanent habitation in Southern Alberta.



Mounted Policemen chasing whiskey smugglers.

Two years later, it became the headquarters of the force. In these first years, the Police built quite a number of forts throughout the West, such as Fort Qu'Appelle, Battleford, and Fort Saskatchewan. Two of the forts built in the south country during 1875 are worth special mention. MacLeod named one of them after his Scottish birth-place, Calgary. Very soon it somehow lost its second "r," and in time the place grew to be a city of first importance. The other was in the Cypress Hills and was called Fort Walsh after the

officer who built it. Fort Walsh is now no more, but fifty years ago it was next to Fort MacLeod in importance, for the Cypress Hills were the favourite meeting ground of the fierce western tribes.

Colonel MacLeod and his men did not wait until they had provided shelter for themselves before they began to run down the wild whiskey pedlars. The Police had hardly arrived, when an Indian named Three Bulls brought word of one of these evil men fifty miles away. Inspector Crozier and ten men rode off at once, and soon they brought back five traders, several wagon-loads of whiskey, and a great stock of buffalo robes, guns, and revolvers. The whiskey was promptly poured out in the snow, the furs were confiscated, and the men were given their choice of imprisonment or a heavy fine. Before long, a "flashy" man arrived from Fort Benton and paid the fines, for he was their chief. These wild Americans had everything their own way to the south of the line, and they hated the Police for stopping their wicked traffic when they crossed the border. One of them, who was caught a little later and immediately condemned by Colonel MacLeod to be locked up in the jail of the fort, burst out: "When I get out of here, if you put me in, I will make them wires to Washington hum." But MacLeod grimly replied, "Let them hum. In the meantime, you go to jail, and, if you say more, you may have your sentence doubled."

The sudden appearance of this handful of men in red coats had an effect like magic over the whole country. In one of his earliest reports, Colonel MacLeod wrote: "I am happy to be able to report the complete stoppage of the whiskey trade throughout the whole of this section of the country, and that the drunken riots, which in former years were almost a daily occurrence, are now entirely at an end; in fact, a more peaceable community than this, with a very large number of Indians camped along the river, could not be found anywhere."

The natives quickly saw that these bold riders of the plains were in every way their very best friends. Less than three years after their arrival, the head chief of the Blackfeet said: "If the Police had not come to this country where would we all be now? Bad men and whiskey were indeed killing us so fast that very few of us indeed would have been left to-day. The Mounted Police have protected us as the feathers of the bird protect it from the frosts of winter."



Foot parade, drill order, North-West Mounted Police.

Therefore, it was easy for the Police to keep the Indians in order. Whenever a red man committed murder, or stole horses, or was guilty of any other crime, the red coats went after him, and they would go through fire and water till they got him. It was not unusual for a single constable to ride into an Indian camp and arrest a wrong-doer in the midst of his armed people. The rest knew that the captive would be set free if he were really innocent or punished as he deserved if he were guilty.

Few people know how much we owe to the North-West Mounted Police, later and better known as the Royal North-West Mounted Police. From the time that white settlement first began to push in from the Atlantic over two hundred years ago, there had been trouble with the natives. They had been driven back and back before the advancing farmer, who destroyed their hunting fields. They were robbed of their means of living, they fought to save themselves. At the very time when the Police were beginning their work in the Canadian West, the last of the long series of terrible wars between the red and the white man was raging just across the border. Many white scalps dangled at red men's belts, and many a white settler shot red men as if they were wolves prowling about. The Police saved us from all these terrors. They explained to the Indians that they had not come to steal their lands, that the Great White Mother (Queen Victoria) would send men to make treaties with them so that they would always have lands upon which to live, and the Indians trusted them.

Three years from the time that these men in scarlet tunics began to ride over the plains, the danger of a wild Indian war had passed. They had so won the confidence of the natives that they gladly agreed to a number of treaties with the Canadian government which kept the red men and the white men from fighting each other. The natives gave up all their rights to the land and agreed to let settlers come in. In return, the government promised them several things for all time. Each chief was to receive twenty-five dollars a year, each head man fifteen dollars, and each man, woman, and child five dollars. They were also given land for their own, where no white men were allowed to settle. These reserves were quite generous, for there was a square mile for every family of five Indians. The government also gave them farming implements, grain, cattle, and other necessary assistance to earn their living in a new way. Instead of destroying him, the white man was

taking the red man by the hand to help him up to a more civilized way of life.

These treaties were made just in time. The buffalo, the Indians' only means of livelihood, were fast disappearing. They were slaughtered every year by the scores of thousands in a most reckless manner. Often they were killed only for their tongues, and the rest of the carcass was left for the wolves to devour. In 1875, the plains were often black with enormous herds stretching away as far as the eye could see, but by 1880 they were almost all gone. They went so fast that many people then thought it a mystery, and even to-day we cannot be sure why they vanished so suddenly. The Indians would have starved, or they would have lived by killing white men and taking their goods, had not these treaties provided a way of salvation.

These treaties were also made just in time to prevent the bloody Indian war then raging to the south from spreading north across the border.

The United States Indians were sending braves and chiefs up to the Canadian Indians urging them to join them, and there is no telling what might have happened had not the Mounted Police and these treaties held our Indians back. How close we came to this great danger may be seen in the story of Sitting Bull, the great chief of the Sioux.

In the summer of 1876, the United States troops who were fighting the Indians suffered a disastrous defeat. Sitting Bull caught General Custer and two hundred and sixty-four cavalymen, almost as many as the whole of the Police in the



Mounted Police badge.

Canadian West, and slew every one of them. Then came several thousand soldiers of the main army, and the Indians retired northward into what is now Southern Saskatchewan. Three thousand crossed the border at the close of the year and appealed to the Police to protect them.

They said that "they had been driven out by the Americans and had come to look for peace; that they had been told by



Fort Carlton in 1871.

their grandfathers that they would find peace in the land of the British . . . that they had not slept sound for years and were anxious to find a place where they could lie down and feel safe." In the spring of 1877, Sitting Bull himself followed with another large force.

Inspector Walsh met these tribes at the border and made them promise to obey the laws of the Great White Mother. Shortly afterwards, three Americans arrived in Sitting Bull's

camp to persuade the Indians to return. One was a priest, and therefore was safe, but the other two would have been shot on the spot if Sitting Bull had not given his promise to Walsh that he and his people would keep the law. The great chief sent for the Police, and four officers at once appeared in the camp, where a conference was now held. After the Americans had tried to tempt the Indians back to their country,



Buffalo dance of the Sioux. From a sketch by Sydney Hall, 1881.

Sitting Bull turned to Assistant Commissioner Irvine and said: "If I remain here, will you protect me?" and Irvine replied: "I told you I would as long as you behave yourself." Then Sitting Bull flatly refused to go. "Once I was rich," he said, "plenty of money, but the Americans stole it all in the Black Hills. What should I return for? To have my horse and arms taken away?"

Later in the summer, two American generals appeared, and there was another conference at which MacLeod, who

was now Commissioner of the force, presided. Sitting Bull shook hands warmly with MacLeod and Inspector Walsh, but he would not look at the Americans. Again he refused to budge. "To-day," he said, "you heard the sweet talk of the Americans. They would give me flour and cattle, and when they got me across the line they would fight me. I don't want to disturb the ground or the sky. I came to raise my children



Ugly customers at Smart's store, Battleford. From a sketch by Sydney Hall, 1881.

here. God Almighty always raised me buffalo meat to live on. We will pay for what we want here. We asked the Americans to give us traders, but instead of this we got fire balls. All of the Americans robbed, cheated, and laughed at us. Now I tell you all that the Americans have done to us, and I want you to tell our Great Mother all. I could never live over there again. They never tell the truth; they told me that they did not want to fight, but they commenced it."

The American government pressed the Canadian government to force these American Indians out of the country. Canada,



however, did not wish to betray these poor people who had sought a refuge on her soil, nor would she run the risk of an Indian war by trying to drive them out. But something else was now beginning to force them back. The buffalo were going fast, and Sitting Bull's followers, threatened by starvation, began to slink away home. With those that remained, he wandered over the country between Fort Walsh and Fort Qu'Appelle.

One day in 1881, he turned up with twelve hundred of his people at Fort Qu'Appelle, where he met Colonel Steele and demanded a reserve and provisions. Steele sent an urgent message to Edgar Dewdney, whom the Dominion government had recently made Indian Commissioner to look after all Indian affairs, and Dewdney was soon on the scene. He told Sitting Bull that Canada could not give him a reserve because he had a reserve in the United States and really belonged there. He tried to persuade him to return to his own country, and offered to feed him and his people on the way. Sitting Bull now gave in and set out with his people for Wood Mountain on the southern border of the present province of Saskatchewan.

When they arrived at Wood Mountain, there was no more food, and Sitting Bull was in an ugly temper. From Inspector Macdonell, who commanded there, he demanded food. Macdonell refused. Sitting Bull threatened to take it by force, but Macdonell replied that he would give him bullets instead of bread if he tried that game.

"I am cast away," cried Sitting Bull. "No," insisted Macdonell. "You are not cast away. I am speaking for your own good and the good of your people and giving you good advice. You have been promised pardon and food and land if you return to your own reservation in the United States. I advise you to go, and I will help you and your people to travel if you accept the terms that have been offered you." Sitting Bull knew that Macdonell was his friend, and, there-

fore, he took his advice. On the next day, they rode across the border together, and Sitting Bull and his people went home to their reserve.

Meanwhile, the papers and the people in Eastern Canada were almost in a panic. They demanded that whole regiments of soldiers be shipped out to deal with these dangerous intruders, but there was no need for them. The astonishment of Eastern Canadians was almost as great as that of the Americans at the way that the little body of Police handled and got rid of this large force of warlike Indians, who might have stirred up all the tribes of the West to engage in a ghastly war.

The North-West Mounted Police made this country safe for settlers. They laid the first foundations for the growth of the Canadian North-West.

## CHAPTER XVI

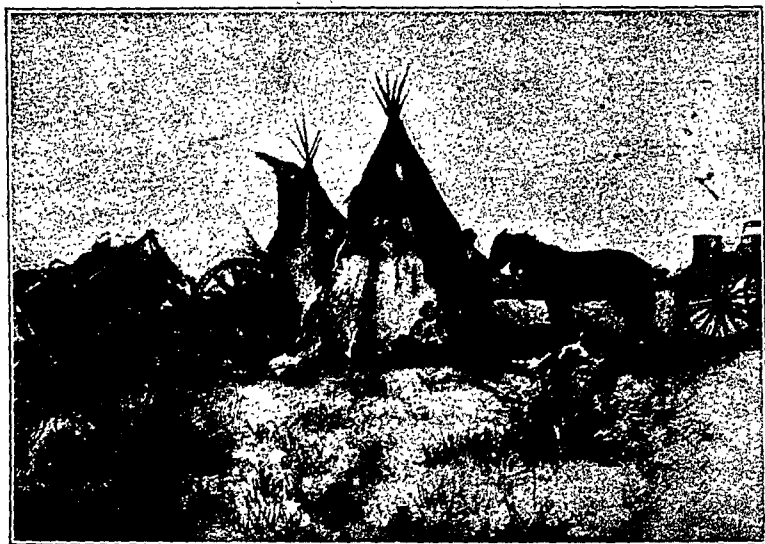
### *Opening the Doors of the Country.*

Half-breeds were the first settlers beyond the new province of Manitoba. Some of these had grown up around the various fur-trading posts, but many others, during the "sixties" moved west from the Red River and, after some years' wandering, they settled down in two districts under the guidance of their priests. One of these districts was the country between the lower reaches of the Northern and the Southern Saskatchewan; the other was around St. Albert, near the present city of Edmonton. There they lived in much the same way as we saw them living on the banks of the Red River.

White settlers followed on their heels during the "seventies," as soon as the Police made the region safe for them to live in. They appeared in three different parts of the country almost immediately. In the foot-hills of what is now Southern Alberta, growing herds of cattle took the place of the dwindling herds of buffalo, and the great ranching industry began. It could not have begun earlier, because the live stock would not have been safe from the untamed natives. Indeed, for some time yet, ranchers and police were worried by red-skinned cattle thieves.

Ranching, of which we shall have more to say in the last chapter, was not the only great industry which was to begin here at this time. In 1870, Nicholas Sheran came up from Montana with a trader. On the Old Man River, he saw something that caught his eye—a seam of coal. On examining it, he found that it was of poor quality, but concluded that better might be found not far off. Therefore, he went up the river

and discovered what he was looking for. He filled his wagon with the "black diamonds" and headed his ox-team south. Two hundred miles away, at Fort Benton in Montana, he sold the first load of Alberta coal. He continued this business for four years until a nearer market suddenly appeared with the establishment of Mounted Police posts. Then a few settlers arrived, and he supplied them too. By 1879 he had a real



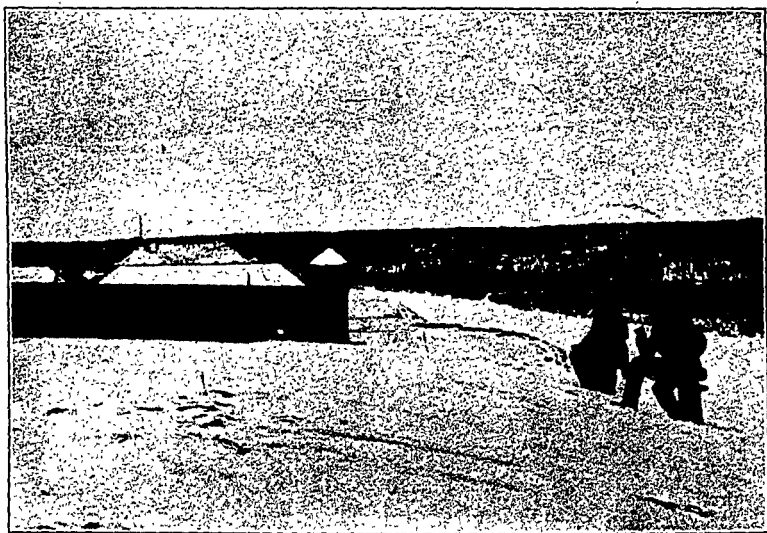
A prairie scene, 1876.

mine. In that year, a son of Sir Alexander T. Galt, an eastern capitalist, visited the district and caught Sheran's vision of a fortune in coal. The father caught the vision from his son and organized the North-West Coal and Navigation Company to mine with modern methods on a large scale. This was the beginning of Lethbridge, where, in the summer of 1928, a monument was erected to the father of Alberta's coal industry, Nicholas Sheran.

Most of the white people who came into the North-West Territories in the "seventies," however, did not settle in the south. They followed the well marked cart trail which led from Fort Garry past Fort Pelly to the Northern Saskatchewan and on to Edmonton. Some found homes for themselves between Battleford and Prince Albert; others pushed on to live around Edmonton. Some of these "Old Timers" are still living and tell interesting stories of how they travelled and how they lived in those days.

A few were Kildonan families. Finding that the Red River was becoming too settled to suit their taste, they pushed west to live over again the hardy pioneer life which they preferred. Those who came from Eastern Canada had to leave the railway down in the United States and proceed by boat or cart to Fort Garry before they struck west. They brought what effects they could, farm implements, livestock, and furniture, and they completed their outfit in Winnipeg which was now beginning to grow rapidly. In the stone bastions of Fort Garry lay piles of ox harness several feet deep. There the newcomers could rummage till they pulled out what they wanted and after paying their money, carry it away. On completing their final preparations, during which they camped on what is now Portage Avenue, a short distance from Main Street, they set out for their promised land. The way was very different from, but quite as trying as that over which the Children of Israel passed long ago. Instead of finding manna, they carried rusty salt pork which tasted badly until they got used to it. But the question of food did not trouble them nearly so much as other trials which beset their path. Many of these settlers now learned for the first time how stubborn an ox can be and how viciously mosquitoes can bite. Just as exasperating as these beasts, great and small, were the mud holes of all sizes, in which whole parties of immigrants were often stuck for days. Some faint hearts gave up the struggle;

sold all their belongings to other pioneers, and went back to where they belonged. The valiant ones pressed on. In a month if the weather were good, in two months if it were bad, they might reach Prince Albert. The journey to Edmonton was just as long again. Some women and children followed their men folk when the latter had built homes, but many accompanied them and shared all the trials and worries of beginning life anew where no white people had dwelt before.



Edmonton in 1871.

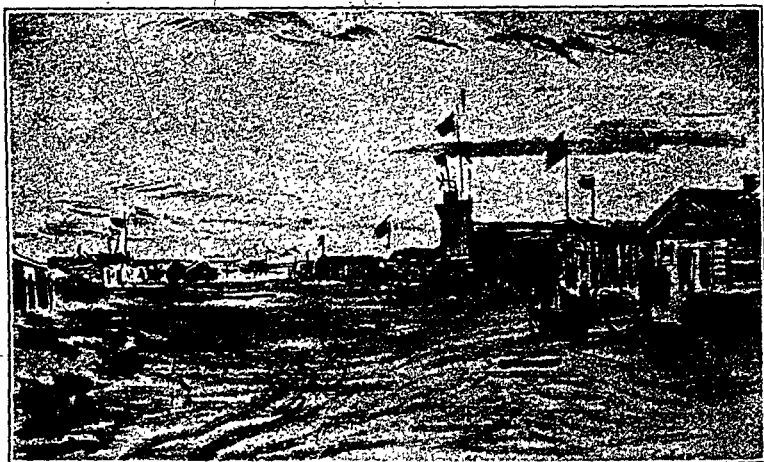
Those who arrived were farmers and traders, and some of them were both. Many hoped to get a good share of the business which the Hudson's Bay Company had enjoyed, now that its monopoly was gone forever. Those who took up farms could not grow wheat and other produce to ship out of the country for sale abroad. They were in the same position as the Red River settlers in earlier years. It cost too much to send things out by cart, and, therefore, they could sell only in the local market.

That there was any market at all may seem surprising to-day, but it did exist. One great reason for this was the disappearance of the buffalo. The people of all shades of colour from brown to white had to eat, and, when one supply of food was failing, another had to be found. There was also a considerable amount of money in the hands of various people who wanted and needed to spend it. The Indians were receiving large sums of cash every year from the Canadian government. Somewhat over three hundred thousand dollars a year were coming into the country for the pay and support of the Mounted Police. The Hudson's Bay Company, also, had to purchase supplies, for its business still went on, principally in the north, and rival traders, who were now admitted freely, had likewise to buy supplies.

Markets mean centres of population, and little communities, such as Prince Albert, Battleford, Calgary, and Edmonton, arose with a few stores, and perhaps a small saw-mill and a flour-mill. There prices were very high. In 1875, in the small village of Calgary, which began to grow around the fort of the Police, there was such a demand for the necessities of life that flour sold for twenty-five dollars a bag of one hundred pounds, sugar and salt were worth fifty cents a pound, and a bushel of barley suitable for a horse brought two dollars and a half. Three years later in Battleford, eggs were seventy-five cents a dozen, and onions were four dollars a bushel. Such prices gave rise to stores and drew settlers. The country was importing food that it could grow, if there were only people to grow it. In 1875, more than a thousand Red River carts laden with flour, oats, barley, and vegetables left Manitoba for the North-West Territories, as the rest of the country was called. In the following year, more than four thousand carts were loaded in Winnipeg, for the plains to the west. Therefore, settlers came, trekking in with Red River cart or "prairie schooner". The latter was a large canvas-covered wagon which

could hold the whole family and all the worldly belongings of a pioneer. As yet, however, settlers could not come in very large numbers, or they would not be able to sell what they could produce. Until the country could find an outside market, its population was bound to be small.

Meanwhile, a further development was taking place in Manitoba, which was much nearer the outside world and growing nearer and nearer all the time. Settlers began to



Calgary in 1881. From a sketch by Sydney Hall.

trickle in from the east and the south, and even from overseas. In 1875, quite a number of homesteaders from Eastern Canada settled in the Pembina Mountain district, eighty miles southwest of Winnipeg. This part of the country attracted them, because there they found rolling hills and scattered woods. These made it seem much more like the land from which they had come than was the bald prairie. Indeed, they had the notion that the prairie was not good for agriculture.

Immediately, however, an entirely different kind of immigrant proved that they were wrong. These were several



thousand German Mennonites, something like our Quakers, who had lived in Russia, where farming on the prairie was common. The first of them came in 1874, planting themselves on the prairie to the east of the Red River. In the next year, still more arrived, and soon a Mennonite community grew up on the west of the Red. In 1876, the first colony of Icelanders

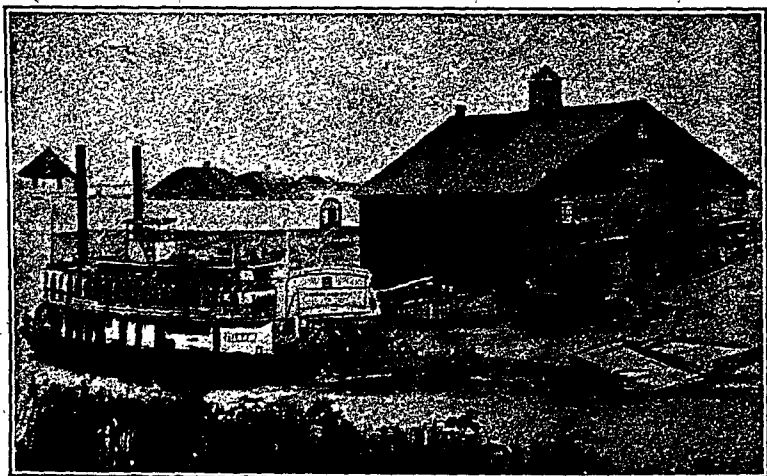


The corner of Main Street and Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, in 1872.

was established on the shores of Lake Winnipeg, about sixty miles from Winnipeg. There they found life much easier than in their old home, and, therefore, many of their friends and relatives followed them to this country. In 1875, Manitoba had ten flour mills, which together could grind four thousand bushels a day. By 1880, the province was filling out. It had a population of about sixty thousand, and its centre, Winnipeg, had grown from a village of two hundred to a city

with a population of nearly eight thousand. Why was there this rapid development?

The real reason for this sudden growth of Manitoba was that now for the first time people found out that they could make money by taking up farms there. As the traders had long ago discovered that the best furs were in the North, so now people discovered that the best wheat was grown in the North. At the same time, the gulf which had cut the country off from the outside world was being rapidly bridged.



The steamer *International*.

In 1872, something very important happened on the Red River—a new steamboat appeared. Up to this time, the only steamer on the river, the *International*, belonged to the Hudson's Bay Company and carried only the company's goods. But the new steamer would carry anybody and anybody's goods, so long as they paid for the service. This new steamer made money, and soon there was a regular line of boats plying up and down the stream during the summer.

Sending goods by steamer was so much cheaper than by Red River cart that the caravans of carts now vanished, and the quantity of goods coming into and going out of the country greatly increased. Manitoba's door to the markets of the world was beginning to open. In 1876, over eight hundred bushels of hard wheat were shipped to Toronto, the first to be sent out of the country. Soon the door was to be opened wide. The railway had crept up to the border at Emerson, hard by the old Pembina, and at the close of 1878 a railway from St. Boniface to Emerson was finished. Manitoba was linked with the railroad system of the United States. There was now no limit to what the farmers might grow, because they could get it out and sell it at a profit. The price of wheat in Winnipeg had been fifty cents a bushel; now it jumped to seventy-five cents. People saw this great change coming, and they prepared for it. Before the railway was finished, Manitoba had a wheat crop of more than a million bushels.

When Manitoba was ten years old, it had a population ten times as large as the whole of the country which is now covered by Saskatchewan and Alberta, that is, without counting the Indians. This was because the door to the North-West Territories was still closed. Soon, however, it was to be opened by pressure from across the Rocky Mountains.

British Columbia forced the railway through this prairie country. Having grown up quite a separate colony on the Pacific coast, it joined the Dominion in 1871 on one condition—that Canada should build a railway across the continent within ten years. Canada failed to live up to her promise, but she could not back out of it, because British Columbia might have withdrawn from the Dominion. There was a bitter quarrel for a while, but at last British Columbia agreed to extend the time.

The reason for the delay was that Canada was yet a poor country, and this was a gigantic undertaking. Many, many

millions of dollars would have to be spent upon the railway before those who spent this money could get a dollar back. The Canadian government tried to tempt capitalists to build the line by offering to give them millions of acres of land and millions of dollars, but no capitalist would look at the land or the money. They were all afraid that they would lose more than they would gain. Therefore, the government had to try to do it as a public work. This meant such an enormous expense that many people were frightened. They feared that it would make the country bankrupt, and, therefore, the government went about the work very cautiously. When the ten years were up, a telegraph line had been run to Edmonton, but there was very little railway built or being built on the prairie. There was the line connecting Winnipeg with Emerson, the line connecting the Red River with Fort William, and a line running a hundred miles west of Winnipeg.

What was needed was a group of capitalists who were familiar with the difficult problem of railway building and who also knew enough about the country to be sure that they would not lose money by constructing a line there. Almost by accident, such a group now appeared. The chief of them were four Canadians. Two had been born in Canada and had settled in the United States, J. J. Hill and N. W. Kittson. The other two were of Scottish birth, Donald A. Smith and his cousin, George Stephen, later Lord Mountstephen. These men had secured control of a railway in Minnesota and were making a great success of it. This road, which soon grew into the Great Northern Railroad, was looking in the direction of the Canadian North-West, for it was just across the border. Here were the men for the task. The Canadian government appealed to them, and they formed the Canadian Pacific Railway Company.

In 1881, Parliament gave its consent to a bargain that the government had made with the company. Canada gave the

company the sections of the railway already built or under construction, twenty-five million dollars, and twenty-five million acres of land in alternate sections along the line of the railway, and the company promised to finish the road by 1891. The company at once began to work.

On the very last day of 1881, a stranger appeared in the city of Winnipeg. He was a Dutch American, but was to become one of the greatest Canadians of his day. This was the first general manager of the Canadian Pacific Railway, who was later to become Sir William Van Horne, the president of the company. He really built the road. During the rest of the winter, he was busy day and night laying his plans. Before the snow had gone in the spring, he was gathering huge supplies in Winnipeg—lumber from the Lake of the Woods and Minnesota, spruce ties from the forests east of Winnipeg, and steel rails from England and Germany.



Sir William Van Horne.

The rails came in train-load after train-load, and more were coming in a steady stream. To make sure that the stream would continue to flow properly, Van Horne posted men all along the line of the railways from New York. These men watched the train-loads as they passed and telegraphed what they saw to Van Horne. If there was a delay at any point, he telegraphed back to speed things up.

In the spring of 1882, everything leaped west from Winnipeg. First came the parties fixing the exact location of the railway.

Then came gangs with ploughs and scrapers grading up the line. Behind them came construction cars and expert track-layers, and behind them again came trains and an army of men handling materials for the road and supplies for the men. There were over five thousand men and seventeen hundred teams at work on the prairie. Van Horne seemed to be everywhere, "going like a whirlwind wherever he went, and stimulating every man he met." He was out to break all records in railway construction, and he did it. Before the winter set in, nearly five hundred miles were built.

The original plan accepted by the Dominion government some years before had been to run the road straight north-west from the Lake of the Woods, across the Red River at Selkirk, over the narrows of Lake Manitoba, and on to the Northern Saskatchewan. Up this, it was to go past Edmonton and pierce the Rocky Mountains through the Yellowhead Pass. This route was chosen by Sandford Fleming, whom the government had appointed in 1871 to find where the railway should be laid. The reason for running it this way was that it might serve a larger territory than if it ran along one side of the country near the border, and also that the Yellowhead was the only pass over which it was thought that a railway could cross. Had this line been followed, it would have passed by Winnipeg and all the settlements along the Assiniboine River. Therefore, the people complained loudly, and the government agreed that the road should run south of Lake Manitoba instead of across its narrow middle.

The new company now made a further change, adopting the more southerly route of the present main line. Although the climb over the Kicking Horse Pass was much steeper, this route was shorter, and the company was in a great hurry to finish the road that it might commence to earn some money. The final decision to build the line straight to the Kicking Horse Pass was made in the winter of 1882-1883, when Van

Horne went down to Montreal to consult with the president, George Stephen, and the directors of the company. At the same time another important point was settled.

The government wished the road to be carried right through on Canadian soil to the East, but Stephen and other members of the company were doubtful about running the line around the north of the Great Lakes. Van Horne now insisted that it could and should be done, and he had his way. This decision had a very great influence upon the history of the Canadian North-West. It made this country more a part of Canada than it otherwise would have been. It would have been a sort of backyard to the North-West of the United States, if the only way out had been over American railways. The building of the line through Northern Ontario also meant that more people would come to this country. So long as the only way into the country was through the United States, many who left their old homes with the intention of settling in Manitoba never reached their destination. On every train there was at least one American immigration agent who went up and down among the passengers, tempting them to stop off and find homes in the United States. They praised the country through which they were passing and ran down the country to the north, where, they said, nothing but icicles grew.

In the spring of 1883, Van Horne was again out on the prairie, and the railway rolled west. In August it reached Calgary, and by the end of the season it was up in the mountains. The sections through the Rockies and along the north of Lake Superior could not be built so fast as the line across the prairie, but they also were pushed with great energy. On November 7th, 1885, at Craigellachie, British Columbia, Donald A. Smith drove the last iron spike in the line which tied Eastern and Western Canada together, and in the summer of 1886, the settlers on the prairie heard the whistle of the first train going all the way from Montreal to the Pacific.

Although the prairie section was the easiest to construct, it had its peculiar difficulties. On one occasion, an Indian chief named Pie-a-Pot and his tribe camped right across the line. When the railway men asked him to move, he laughed in their faces. Then two redcoats appeared, a sergeant and a constable. The sergeant ordered the natives off, but again



Chief Pie-a-Pot.

they laughed and fired off their rifles into the air. Thereupon, the sergeant pulled out his watch and gave them fifteen minutes to go. The red men continued to jeer until the fifteen minutes were up. Then they had the surprise of their lives. The sergeant jumped off his horse, ran into the chief's tent, kicked out the main pole, and Pie-a-Pot was nearly caught by the collapse of his own house. The sergeant did the same to the next tent, and then he turned to the chief and his astonished men, saying, "Now move and move quickly." They did.

Much greater was the danger when the road approached the Blackfoot reserve. The young men wanted to fight the pale-faces who were making a trail for their iron horses that breathed fire. Old Crowfoot did his best to hold them back, but he and his people had a real grievance. The government had promised the company to arrange with the Indians for any land in a reserve that the railway might need, and had neglected to make any bargain with the Blackfeet. The builders

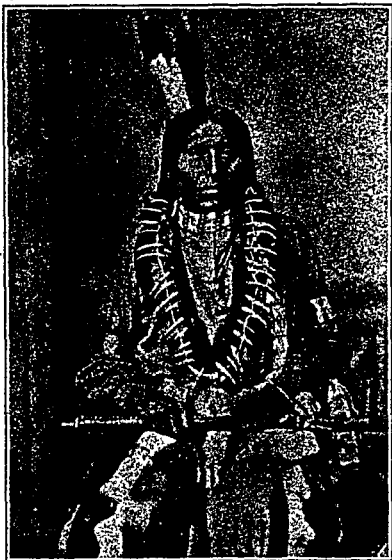


did not know of this neglect and went ahead to lay the tracks across the reserve. The next morning they awoke to find that the tracks had been pulled up in the night. There was serious trouble ahead, unless the natives were quickly satisfied.

The missionary who was then with them sent a runner to Father Lacombe, who rode as fast as his horse would carry him to Crowfoot's village.

Finding what was the matter, Lacombe rushed off to get a large supply of tea and tobacco. This he distributed to the red men, at the same time explaining that the government needed the land for the railway and would give them other lands instead. Thereupon, the Blackfeet, after much solemn smoking in council, agreed to let the iron trail run through their reserve.

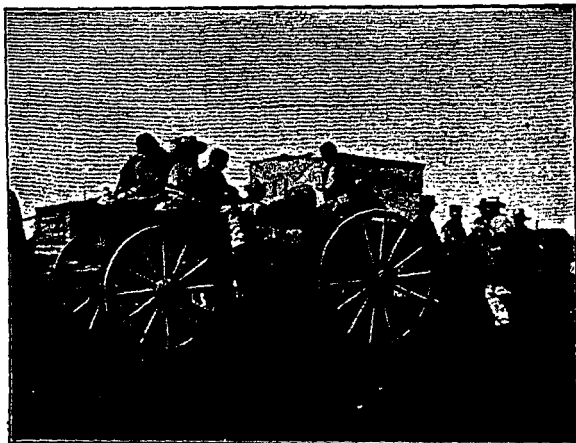
Van Horne rewarded Crowfoot by giving him a perpetual pass over the railway, and the old chief was so tickled by this gift that he had it framed and ever afterwards wore it suspended from his neck by a chain. Shortly after the above incident, officials of the road steamed into Calgary on the first train. Father Lacombe met them, and they had a merry time together. To show their appreciation of what he had done, Stephen resigned his office, and the directors present elected Father Lacombe in his place. For one hour, the priest was president of the Canadian Pacific Railway and greatly enjoyed this humorous and graceful compliment.



Chief Crowfoot.

The building of the Canadian Pacific Railway was one of the most important events in the history of Canada. Without the railway, Canada could not have become a "Dominion from sea to sea," and the development of this part of the country would have been very much slower. The railway opened the doors of the North-West Territories to the markets of the world.

To gain all the advantage of a "head start," many people rushed in before the railway. Some were so eager that they



On the way to the homestead.

would soon come. Prince Albert, Battleford, and Edmonton became thriving little communities. In 1877, a government for the North-West Territories was set up in Battleford. This young capital had the first newspaper in the Territories, the *Saskatchewan Herald*. The next appeared in Edmonton. This was the *Bulletin*, published by Frank Oliver, which began as a small sheet of five by seven inches in December, 1880. The future capital of Alberta had already a steam saw and grist mill.

So soon as people knew that the Canadian Pacific was going to make for the Kicking Horse Pass, they began to pour in along the southern route. It was not uncommon for settlers to

came before the Canadian Pacific gave up the idea of running its line through the Yellowhead Pass, and, therefore, they settled along the Northern Saskatchewan where they thought that the railway

# THE BULLETIN

VOL. I.

EDMONTON, N.W.T., DECEMBER 6, 1880.

NUMBER 1.

## NO TELEGRAMS.

As the line has been down since Saturday between Hay Lakes and here, we are without telegrams for this issue. A man will leave to-morrow to repair it, and by next week we hope to be able to give the latest news from the East up to date.

## "HEWALD" EXTRA.

The following extra from the "Saskatchewan Herald" office arrived here by last mail:—

BATTLEFORD, Nov. 22, 1880.

By Cable to the "Herald."—London, Nov. 15.—Hankin beat Trickett by three boat lengths, winning the championship of the world.

From Winnipeg.—Garfield, Republican, has been elected President of the United States.

A provisional contract has been signed by which the syndicate binds itself to complete the prairie Section of the C.P.R. in three years.

It is said there is great trouble among the people (original copy too indistinct) have been shot, and should there not be a change in the aspect of affairs a revolution is imminent.

**REDUCING THE FORCE.**—Eastern papers say that the Department of the Interior, having concluded to reduce the number of officers in charge of the Mounted Police by six, the position made vacant by the death of the late Superintendent Dalrymple Clarke will not be filled. There are to be no immediate dismissals, but as officers are removed by the hand of death, or voluntarily send in their resignations, their respective offices will be abolished, and the work divided up among those remaining.

The Government has relieved Mr. Ryan of the contract for the first hundred miles of the C.P.R. west of Winnipeg, and will proceed with the construction in a more substantial manner than his contract called for—and, it is to be hoped, a little quicker.

The Scott Temperance Act has been carried by a large majority in Marquette County, Manitoba. The people of Portage la Prairie have entered a protest against it. They don't know what is good for themselves.

Track was laid on the C.P.R. east of Winnipeg to within three miles of Rat Portage at last accounts.

The weekly mail service has been extended to Bird Tail Creek settlement.

Sitting Bull is again talking of going south.

## LOCAL.

MR. A. LANG has captured a young silver grey fox. A SPECIAL CONSTABLE is to be sworn in for duty around Edmonton.

REV. MR. STEINHÄUSER, of White Fish Lake, lately addressed the Methodist conference in Montreal.

MR. CURT has the contract for the Indian Department flour at \$7.50 for Edmonton delivery and \$8.50 for Victoria.

GEORGE GAGNON lately killed a very large wolf which, after disposing of one of his sheep, came back for another.

THE sheep lately imported from Montana by J. Volier, and sold in this district are doing much better than was expected.

ALEX. McDONALD and Albert Boyd left for Bow River to-day. The former expects to return to Edmonton next April to start farming.

MR. GLASS has started a subscription list for the purpose of supplying the Methodist Mission church with firewood, oil, etc., for the winter.

ABRAHAM SPLETN and others from the Rattle River settlement 50 miles from here, brought the first grain to the Edmonton Mills to-day—31 bushels of barley.

NEW YEAR'S DAY is drawing nigh, and we have not heard of anything being done about the grain show. Would it not be advisable to start the ball.

A BIG LAKE resident wants to know why the Government potatoe contract was not awarded to him, seeing that his offer was 20 cents lower than that of the party who secured it.

MR. LUCAS, Government farmer at Peace Hills, has been supplied with his share of that band of crows. They are reported to be the sickest looking lot of animals in the country.

THE following are the ruling prices for produce in this vicinity:—Oats \$1.00 per bushel of 34 lbs., wheat \$2.00 to \$2.50, barley \$1.00, peas 25 per lb., potatoes \$1.00, onions \$2.00, and butter 50.

LAST Saturday morning the thermometers at Fts. Edmonton and Saskatchewan registered 47 below zero. This cold snap, which set in last Tuesday, is much more severe than the corresponding one last year, but appears to be about over.

MR. WM. CURT is in a bad fix about his threshing. Lamoreaux threshed out 1,000 bushels on his Sturgeon River farm, and quit, leaving two stacks unthreshed, and says that he will set fire to his machine rather than thresh another bushel, while Smith is going to quit threshing, on account of the cold, and make shingles for the rest of the winter.

The first issue of the Edmonton Bulletin, December 6th, 1880.

watch where the surveyors drove their stakes for the railway and then take up farms right there. All along the line of the railway, communities sprang up in 1883. The principal centres were Regina, Moose Jaw, Medicine Hat, and Calgary. Of these, Regina was for many years the most important. Because it was on the railway, it now became the capital instead of Battleford, and, at the same time, it became the headquarters of the North-West Mounted Police. It was first called Pile of Bones Creek, a name which nobody liked. Therefore, the governor-general, the Marquis of Lorne, was asked to give it a new and respectable name. As he was married to



Early Government buildings, Regina.

Princess Louise, he christened it Regina in honour of his wife's mother, Queen Victoria. In a few months, Regina was a rapidly growing town with a newspaper of its own, the *Regina Leader* founded by a brilliant Irishman, Nicholas Flood Davin.

The country around was being settled rapidly. In the spring of 1883, all the land for twenty miles was taken up. In older Canada, the newcomer had to face the long and heavy task of conquering a hardwood forest before he could get at the soil; but here in the newer Canada, it was much easier for the pioneer. Though he might grow a few potatoes and oats during the first season, his main work was with a yoke of oxen and a plough "breaking" the prairie. The upturned sod was very

tough, but now it rotted and thereby unlocked the soil for a good crop in the following year. Meanwhile the homesteader, who was often a bachelor, lived on the food that he had brought and the wild fowl that he could shoot. There was plenty of pasture for his few cattle, and he commonly cut wild hay, by the ton to feed them during the winter. For wood, he sometimes had to go five or six miles to a bluff or river valley. There he cut logs to make his "shack" and gathered his winter



A Red River cart at Calgary. From a painting by E. Roper, 1887.

supply of fuel. Many a settler first dwelt in a tent, and later, when he found more time, fortified himself against the winter with a warmer habitation of sods or logs, and built a similar shelter for his animals. It was a hard life, but it gave health and wealth to those who were not afraid.

For countless ages this had been the land of the red men and the buffalo, and now it was becoming a white man's country, one of the richest agricultural lands in the world. But just as the new day was dawning, a storm blew up, and many drops of human blood stained the prairie.

## CHAPTER XVII

### *The sad Story of Riel and his second Rebellion.*

Louis Riel hated Canada, and he had some reason for this feeling. When Bishop Taché returned to the Red River in the spring of 1870, he announced that the government would forgive all the rebels. Riel naturally thought that this included him, and the bishop thought so too. But they were both mistaken, because Scott had been murdered after, and not before, the government had promised to pardon everybody. Therefore, Riel fled for his life when Colonel Wolseley reached Fort Garry. With longing eyes, he looked back to his own country, and hoped that he might soon return and live in it as an honoured citizen.

In 1871, he returned to offer his services in defending the province against some Fenian invaders who wanted to conquer it for the United States. He actually got two hundred and fifty mounted Métis to help him. Even this did not wipe out the stain. The reason was that in Ontario in particular there was a strong determination that Riel should be punished for his crime. The feeling was so pronounced that the government would probably have been forced to take action. Therefore, in order to save him, they paid him a large sum of money to leave the country.

For a second time, he went into exile, but he liked it no better than he did the first time, and soon he was back among his people. Twice they elected him to Parliament. After his first election in 1873, he went to Ontario, but to escape trial he was compelled to leave hurriedly. After his second election in 1874, he appeared in Ottawa and attempted to

take his seat in the House of Commons, but that body expelled him by a vote of one hundred and forty-four to sixty-eight. He was never tried for putting Scott to death. In 1875, he was banished for five years, but even this did not keep him out of Canada.

In the very next year, he turned up in Montreal, but he was no longer the same Riel. Some people go insane by imagining that they are being persecuted, and this is what was happening to Riel. It is not very surprising, for there was insanity in his family, and he certainly had a large number of enemies. His friends became alarmed at his strange behaviour and tried to keep him quiet, but they could not. One day, he entered a church, made a noisy disturbance during mass, proclaimed himself superior to any of the priests present, and demanded that he conduct the service. He was then examined, found insane, and straightway shut up in an asylum. After a year and a half he was released as sane. He at once went to the United States, where again he went insane and had to be locked up for a while.

After this, he wandered to the American North-West, but everywhere he went he seemed to get into trouble. He tried to make a living in various ways, but did not succeed very well. In 1881, he was on the Missouri trading whiskey to the Indians. There he met some chiefs from Canada, whom we will see shortly on the Saskatchewan, and he tried to make them hate Canada as much as he did. One of the chiefs, Wandering Spirit, later described the meeting in these words: "He gave us liquor and said he would make war on this country. He asked us to join him in wiping out all Canadians. The government had treated him badly. He would demand much money from them. If they did not give, he would spill blood, plenty Canadian blood."

Not long afterwards, Riel's wildness died down, and he became an excellent country school teacher in Montana.

He had recovered from his insanity and might never have had a return of it if he had continued to live a quiet, wholesome life. All chance of this was ruined one day early in the summer of 1884 when four horsemen from seven hundred miles away rode into the peaceful village where he was settled. Who were they, and what did they want? The answer is a very sad story.



Half-breeds and dogs at Fort Carlton.

After the suppression of the Manitoba rebellion, the Canadian government tried to deal justly with the half-breeds in the new province by setting aside large tracts of land for them. Each was to have a farm of his own, so soon as the land was surveyed and divided up. This, of course, would take some time, and, meanwhile, the half-breeds were given little pieces of paper called scrip. When the survey was finished, any one bringing in one of these pieces of paper was to be given a farm.



This was a very bad arrangement, and it was very badly managed.

The government was so slow in giving out this scrip that many half-breeds did not get it, for they had grown impatient and had wandered west beyond the borders of the province. Many who got it were no better off, for white men cheated them of their lands by buying their scrip for a few dollars or even a few bottles of whiskey.

When they settled down in the Territories, the Métis who had grown up there and those who now came in took up farms after the old fashion, in long, narrow strips running back from the rivers, two miles deep and one-eighth of a mile wide. At first they did not pay much attention to their farms, as their chief occupation was the hunt. Then the buffalo began to go, and they saw that their only means of living was by tilling the land. At once their troubles began, and once more the Canadian government was very stupid.

Just so soon as these people began to realize how much their farms meant to them, they were threatened with losing them. The Canadian government ordered the land to be surveyed and laid out like a checkerboard. All farms were to be the same size as those which the Métis had taken for themselves, but they were to be square instead of oblong. Moreover, every other square mile was either reserved from settlement or held for sale.

This meant that there was not a half-breed farm in the North-West Territories that fitted into the new system. Every one covered some land which the government would not grant, or for which it demanded two dollars an acre. Here and there, a white settler just come into the country took up a square farm that cut across one of the long half-breed farms, and, according to the law, the land belonged to the white man. But the Métis had never forgotten what Canadians had taught them long long years before—that the land really belonged

to the people who grew up on it. Again their lands were being stolen from them, and, now that the buffalo were going, their lands meant everything to them.

As early as 1873, the half-breeds had complained to the Canadian government, and as years passed by their petitions grew in number. But nothing was done. The government away off in Ottawa was deaf to the cry of the half-breeds for justice. Meanwhile, the Indian treaties had been arranged, and these added to the grievance of the Métis.

Nothing was being done for the Métis, but everything was being done for their cousins, the Indians. The red men were given land and a great deal more. They got money, they got cattle and seed, they got farming implements, they got every assistance to begin their new kind of life. Therefore, the half-breeds began to demand help as well as land. Did not the whole country belong to them as much as it did to the Indians? The Métis had no doubt about it.

The Canadian government was even more to blame for the second Riel Rebellion, which now broke out, than it had been for the first. It should have learned a lesson from the first, but it did not. And now it had a great deal more warning than it had received before. The lieutenant-governor of the North-West Territories, Archbishop Taché, and many other white men in the West, both priests and laymen, were doing their best to make the politicians at Ottawa open their ears to the just demands of the half-breeds. But it was all in vain. The natural result was that the Métis grew more and more restless.

Their restlessness was now increased by the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway. Up to this time, many Métis earned considerable money by carrying goods in their Red River carts across the plains. But the railway, because it was a cheaper method of transportation, stopped this freighting from Manitoba. Now there was only the shorter haul from

the nearest railway station in the south. Thus the Canadian Pacific Railway hurt them at once by taking away half their business. It also threatened to hurt them in the future. Would it not bring countless white settlers to crowd them out? They were afraid.

Early in the summer of 1884, some of them held a meeting, and there they decided to send for Riel. He had led them to victory on the banks of the Red River, and could he not do the same on the banks of the Saskatchewan? Four horsemen galloped off to carry the invitation to their old leader down in Montana. These were the men who upset Riel's peace when they alighted in front of his simple little cottage. He could not resist the pitiful cry of his people, and, on July 1st, 1884, he arrived in what is now the province of Saskatchewan. There was no secret about it; everybody knew where he was. His coming was a further warning to the Canadian government. It should have kept him out of the country, or it should have removed the grievances of his people. It did neither.

During the summer and autumn of 1884, Riel spoke at many meetings. He did not urge the people to rebel; he told them to have patience and to behave properly. In September, he helped them to draw up a list of their demands which they called a Bill of Rights, after the Manitoba document of a few years before. They sent it to Ottawa, but the government paid no attention to it. As week after week passed by and no reply came, they began to despair. When people are desperate, they frequently do things that they are sorry for afterwards.

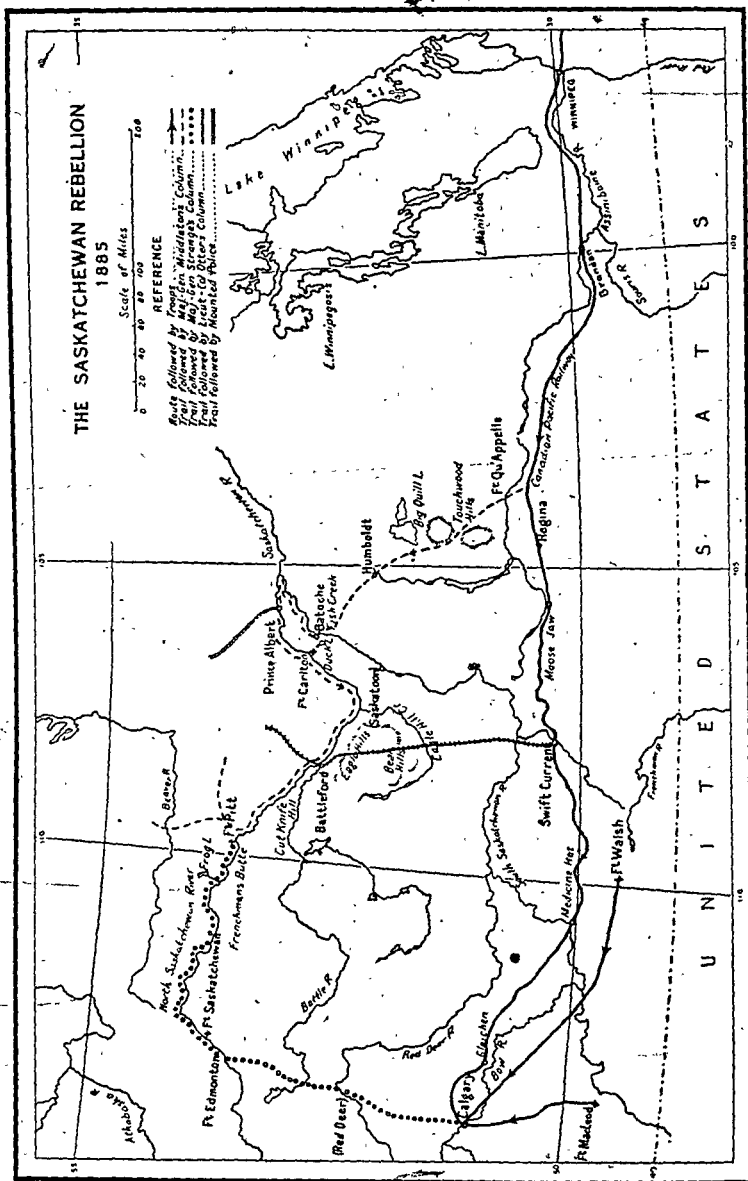
During the winter, a change came over Riel. Disappointment, excitement, and the praise of his followers were unbalancing his mind once more. The priests who had supported the Métis up to this time refused to work with Riel, and he turned against them. He said that he was a prophet whom

# THE SASKATCHEWAN REBELLION 1885

Scale of Miles  
0 20 40 60 80 100

## REFERENCE

Route followed by Fongt .....  
Trail followed by West-Can Column .....  
Trail followed by East-Can Column .....  
Trail followed by East-Co. Oiler's Column .....  
Trail followed by Mounted Police .....



God had chosen to set up a new religion and reform the world. The wilder he became, the more did people fall away from him, until no white men, practically no English half-breeds, and only a small number of the French half-breeds would have anything to do with him. But this only made him more dangerous, because those who stuck by him were filled with wild notions. They were likely to do anything.

In the spring of 1885, Lawrence Clarke, the chief factor of the Hudson's Bay Company in that part of the country, visited Ottawa and there sought in vain to obtain justice for the half-breeds. On March 18th, he was driving from Qu'Appelle to Fort Carlton on his way home, when he met a group of half-breeds. They asked him what the government was going to do. Disgusted with the government's stupidity, he replied that the only answer they would get would be bullets, and that the Police were coming to arrest their leaders. Immediately afterwards, these half-breeds met another party under Riel. The latter were on their way to hold a religious celebration in St. Laurent on the north side of the South Saskatchewan about six miles below Batoche.

When they heard what Clarke had just said, they were thrown into a panic which led to the outbreak of the second Riel Rebellion. They plundered some stores in the neighbourhood, arrested some white men, and set up a rebel government at Batoche on the South Saskatchewan. For some weeks, Riel had been sending runners out among the Indians to stir them up to kill the white men, and now from Batoche the call to arms went forth. It was a terrible thing to do, but, fortunately, the Indians as a whole remained quiet.

Only eighteen miles away on the North Saskatchewan lay Fort Carlton, where a detachment of Mounted Police was commanded by Major Crozier, the officer who had brought the first whiskey traders into MacLeod some years before. He sent a trusted man over to see Riel. This was Thomas McKay,

a native of the country and one of the leading settlers in Prince Albert. Riel went wild when he saw McKay and wanted to have him killed on the spot. He shouted, "You don't know what we are after. We want blood, blood—it's blood we want." But Riel's councillors were not so thirsty for blood, and, therefore, McKay was allowed to return.

On March 26th, Major Crozier, with about one hundred Mounted Police and volunteers from Prince Albert, set out for Batoche to nip the rebellion in the bud. The winter had not yet broken, and the snow was still deep on the ground. There-



Gabriel Dumont.

fore, this little company travelled in a long line of sleighs and had to keep to the trail. Near Duck Lake, they halted before a number of the rebels. Crozier and his interpreter, a noted buffalo hunter and trader named Joseph MacKay, went ahead to speak with an Indian chief and a couple of his counsellors who came out to meet them. A scuffle ensued, and Crozier gave the order, "Fire away, boys!"

The battle of Duck Lake lasted about forty minutes. The rebels were protected by woods on either side of Crozier's force and in front by a depression of the ground which served as a trench. Five were killed, and several were wounded. Among the latter was Gabriel Dumont, who had won fame as a daring rider and a crack shot, and was now their military leader. Riel was also present, but did no fighting. He went about on horseback with only a crucifix in his hand. Crozier's men had no shelter except the sleighs, which they drew up in a rough line across the trail, and, therefore, they suffered badly. Twelve of them were killed or

died of wounds. They were caught in a trap, and all might have been slaughtered on their retreat to Fort Carlton if Riel had not held the victors back. According to Dumont, he begged for the love of God that no more should be slain, saying that already there had been too much blood spilt.

The white men were defeated in battle! The startling news flashed over the country. Two hundred miles up the Saskatchewan, at Frog Lake on the eastern border of the present province of Alberta, the Indians had the news within twenty-four hours. Signal fires had been flaming on the hills. From there all the way down to Prince Albert, the Northern Saskatchewan valley was unsafe for white men. A few were murdered, and many houses went up in smoke. The white settlers took refuge in Fort Pitt, Battleford, and Prince Albert. The Police deserted Fort Carlton the day after the fight at Duck Lake, because they could not defend it against the rebels if they should come.

Up at Frog Lake, the handful of white people saw that the Indians were greatly excited, but they did not know why until the last day of March. Late that evening, a Police constable galloped in, his horse all steaming. He brought the news of the rebellion and a letter from Captain Dickens, a son of the great novelist Charles Dickens, who commanded the Police detachment at Fort Pitt, thirty-five miles down the river. The letter urged all the whites to hurry down to Fort Pitt for safety.

The hamlet of Frog Lake contained a small Police barracks, a Hudson's Bay Company establishment, another little store, a Roman Catholic mission, a grist mill which was being built, and the houses of three government officials. These were the Indian agent who looked after the red men, the farming instructor, and the interpreter. Around the settlement lay Indian reserves. Most of the Indians had been very friendly, but there were some troublesome braves in the band of Big

Bear. This band, which had not yet settled on any reserve, was then camped in the neighbourhood.

The whites now gathered in the middle of the night to discuss their situation. They decided to leave, but the priest persuaded them to remain. He said that they would be safest if they showed confidence in the red men. All agreed, however, that the Police should go, for there were only six of them—too

few to give protection if there was real trouble. Acting on this advice, the Police bundled into a double sleigh and hurried off before dawn.

During the next night, all the horses in the settlement were stolen to prevent any further flight, and on the morning of April 2nd, the ten men and two women in Frog Lake were rounded up by some of Big Bear's braves and ordered off to their camp. Big Bear had been a famous chief and was a friend to the white men, but he was now old, and his young warriors refused to listen to



Chief Big Bear.

him. Instead, they followed Imasees, his son, and Wandering Spirit, the fiercest of their number.

Wandering Spirit had a grudge against Thomas Quinn, the Indian agent, because Quinn was a firm as well as a just man. When the agent refused to go to the camp, Wandering Spirit burst out: "You have a strong head. You boast that when you say no you mean no. To-day, if you love your life, you will do as I tell you. Go to our camp." "Why should I go

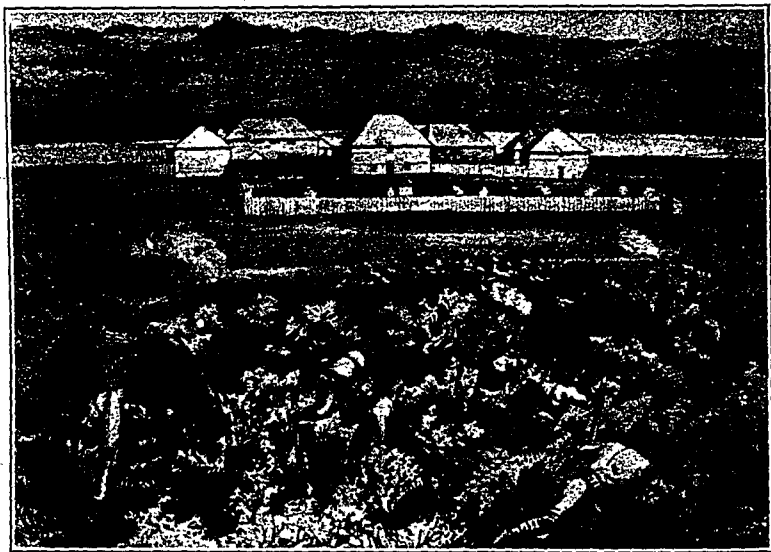


there?" asked Quinn. "Never mind," said the Indian, "Go!" "My place is here," Quinn replied, "Big Bear has not asked me to leave. I will not go." Wandering Spirit raised his rifle, but Quinn did not budge. "I tell you—go!" the savage shouted, and shot him dead. The other eleven set out for the camp, but eight, including the priest who had persuaded them to remain, were shot down as they went. The only white man to survive this massacre of Frog Lake was the agent of the Hudson's Bay Company, W. B. Cameron, who has written a most interesting book about his terrible experiences. He and the two women, whose lives were spared, were now the Indians' prisoners.

Leaving nothing but smoking ruins at Frog Lake, Big Bear's Indians descended the river to take Fort Pitt. On the morning of April 14th, two hundred and fifty warriors appeared at the top of the hill overlooking the fort. There were not one hundred people within the walls, and these included only a couple of dozen Police. Captain Dickens refused to surrender so long as there was a man to point a gun, but there was no hope of them holding out against the savages. The latter invited the Hudson's Bay Company factor, William McLean, better known as "Big Bear" McLean, to come out and talk things over with them. Knowing that the company and its men were much respected by the Indians, he went, but was promptly made a prisoner. As the savages were ready to burn the fort down, he sent a letter to his wife urging all the civilians to come to the camp as hostages, and they did as he suggested.

This left the Police alone in the fort, and they were saved by Big Bear. He was very fond of Captain Dickens, who had more than once supplied him with food and on his last visit to Fort Pitt had given him a blanket. Big Bear wrote to the Police to hurry away, "as the young men are all wild and hard to keep in hand." The old chief used all his influence to hold

his warriors back while the Police embarked in a leaky scow and set off down the Saskatchewan, as the ice on the river had now broken up. They left Fort Pitt on the 15th and reached Battleford seven days later. The little community gave them a hearty reception. The Police band played them into the fort, and the ladies served them an elaborate dinner.



The heroic defence of Fort Pitt.

The Indians now had many prisoners, and two months passed before they let them free. Meanwhile, troops appeared and pursued the red men, and the latter, refusing to drop their captives, forced them to go along with them over the wild country of hills, woods, and muskegs between the Saskatchewan and the Beaver River in the north. More than once, the prisoners' lives were in danger. They were always closely watched. One of the women who survived the Frog Lake massacre, where her husband had been shot down while walking

by her side, wrote: "I used to sleep in a sitting position, and, whenever I would wake up in a startled state from some feverish dream, I invariably saw at the tent door a human eye riveted upon me."

The news of Duck Lake was flashed east as well as west, and all Canada was now astir. From Winnipeg to Halifax, men rushed to the colours, and between four and five thousand troops poured out along the Canadian Pacific Railway. General Middleton, an Imperial officer who was at that time at the head of the Canadian militia, was in command. He divided his force into three. With over eight hundred men, he left the railway at Qu'Appelle on April 6th, and headed for Batoche. A week later, with over five hundred men, Colonel Otter set out from Swift Current for Battleford. General Strange with nine hundred soldiers marched north from Calgary on April 20th, passed through Edmonton, and proceeded down the river. The advance of these forces, by the way, was a boon to many of the farmers. Instead of sowing crops, they made ten dollars a day by hiring out themselves, their horses, and their wagons to help transport the troops and their supplies.

Otter was the first to arrive at his goal. He crossed nearly one hundred and eighty miles of uninhabited wilderness in five and a half days. Great was the rejoicing when his troops reached Battleford. One of the men in the relief force has left the following account of what he saw: "The enclosure (of the fort) is about two hundred yards square, with some log houses as barracks and storehouses, also stables, and inside the enclosure had been pent up for over a month five hundred and thirty people, of whom over three hundred were women and children. Dozens had to huddle together in one tent. In a small house (the Commandant's), a two-story frame cottage, seventy-two people were quartered . . . Food was very scarce, and water was only to be obtained at the risk of death. All the inhabitants of the town were huddled here.

The town is half a mile away, and the people were not allowed to stay in the town, as it was too far away to be under protection, though, strange to say, the Indians did not make any attempt to pillage or burn it. The town consists of forty houses—some of them quite comfortable looking."

Middleton struck the South Saskatchewan at Clark's Crossing, about twenty miles below Saskatoon, and then followed the river. On April 24th, his troops reached Fish Creek, where they saw many signs of a camp recently occupied. Almost immediately, some of the scouts in front fell from their saddles under the deadly fire of rebels hidden in rifle pits. At once a bitter fight began.

The general was anxious about how his volunteer soldiers would behave. They were quite unused to warfare, and here they were in front of an invisible foe. But they conducted themselves heroically. "If anything had been required," wrote Middleton, "to keep the men steady at this rather critical moment, it would have been found in the extraordinarily composed and cool behaviour of William Buchanan, a little bugler of the Ninetieth (from Winnipeg), who, while calmly distributing ammunition along the line, kept calling out in his childish shrill voice, 'Now, boys, who's for more cartridges?'"

By the middle of the afternoon, the rebel fire ceased, but it had already killed ten men and wounded forty others. The battle of Fish Creek was in reality more of a victory for the rebels than it was for the Canadian forces, because Middleton did not dare to move on for a fortnight. Meanwhile, he received news of another fight to the west.

Between thirty and forty miles up the Battle River from Battleford, lay the reserve of Chief Poundmaker. Like Big Bear, he was a friend of the white men, but he was growing old and was finding it difficult to keep his young braves in hand. When there was fighting afoot, they wanted to be in it.

Already they had stolen many cattle, had plundered some houses, and had killed three or four white men. Otter decided to teach them a lesson and also to prevent them from joining Big Bear's band, which he was afraid they might do.

On May 2nd, after an all-night march, Otter, with about three hundred and twenty-five men, approached Poundmaker's camp. They forded Cut Knife Creek and began to climb the slope on the other side, which is known as Cut Knife Hill. At once they were discovered, and the battle began with a race for the top of the hill, the Indians coming from the west and Otter's men coming from the east. The latter won the crest, but found themselves a fine target for the red men, who took cover in gullies on the front, on either side, and even in the rear.

For over five hours the men lay on the bare hill, with the sun and the enemy blazing at them. Otter had a machine gun and two seven-pounders, but they were not a great deal of use. H. A. Kennedy, who was present at the battle, has left a vivid account of it. "The guns were the grimmest joke of all," he wrote. "The gatling sprayed the prairie with a vast quantity of lead, and a machine gun is all very well when your enemy stands in front of it in a crowd, but that is not the Indians' way. They had a wholesome respect for the seven-pounders—which was more than the gunners themselves had, for the wooden trails



Chief Poundmaker.

were rotten and gave way under the recoil, so that one of the guns fell to the ground after every shot, and the other had to be tied to its carriage with a rope."

Some of the men charged down the hill to the front, and they might have taken the Indian camp, but they were ordered back. Presently the whole force was commanded to retreat. "Imagine the Indians' astonishment," wrote Kennedy. "We were leaving them masters of the field. Before half of us had recrossed the creek, they were pouring down the hill after us like a swarm of angry ants. . . . The Indians might have turned our defeat into disaster, if they had circled round and picked us off piecemeal as the long-drawn-out line of sleepy soldiers wound its way home through the woods. And that is exactly what they would have done if their chief had let them, as an Indian explained to me afterwards. 'The young men wanted to,' he said, 'but Poundmaker held them back out of pity for you.' Another old Indian added that the chief brandished his whip and threatened to flog any Indian who dared to go after the white men."

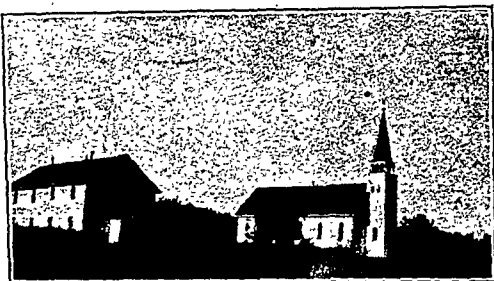
Eight of Otter's men were killed, and fourteen were wounded. The chief result of the battle was that Poundmaker could no longer prevent his victorious warriors from joining the half-breeds.

A week after the defeat at Cut Knife Hill, Middleton set out again from Fish Creek. Two days later, on May 9th, he came to Batoche, the rebels' headquarters, which he was determined to capture. His plan was to attack the village with his troops at the same time as a little stern-wheeler, the *Northcote*, which had come down from Saskatoon, attacked it from the river. Unfortunately, there was a misunderstanding of the orders. An hour before the troops arrived, the little steamboat appeared, and she had a very hot welcome. Borne by the rapid current, she swept past the village, exchanging shots with the rebels on shore, until she ran into the steel

cable of the ferry, which cut off her smoke-stack. She drifted down some miles further, and three days passed before her damage was repaired and she was able to return to Batoche—just after the place had fallen.

The rebels had made careful preparations for the defence of Batoche. They had dug many rifle pits and had so arranged them that no one approaching would know that they were there. In these pits, rebel soldiers lived day and night. They could see and shoot the on-coming soldiers, but the latter could not see them. For three days, Middleton's forces peppered

away at the hidden foe. Each day they made some headway, but each night they retired to where they had set out from in the morning. Middleton was trying to find the weakest point in the rebels' position, but his men did not un-



The church and schoolhouse at Batoche in which the rebels took refuge.

derstand his wise plan. At last they grew impatient with their general, who was trying to prevent too many from being killed and wounded, and, on May 12th, they charged and took the village with a rush.

Most of the rebel leaders escaped at the last moment. Three days afterwards, some of Middleton's scouts captured Riel not far away. He was sent to Regina, where he was later tried and executed. Dumont waited around until he heard that Riel was caught, and then, with a few pounds of biscuits to sustain him, he set off on a several-hundred-mile ride to the United States.

On May 17th, Middleton moved on from Batoche, and three days later he marched into Prince Albert, where fifteen hundred

people, twice the usual population had been cooped up for two months. Towards the end, food had run so short that they had to use some flour that by accident had been soaked in coal oil. After a day and a half there, Middleton went upstream to Battleford, where he arrived on May 24th.

Everything was very much changed by the victory at Batoche and the capture of Riel. The half-breed rebels gave up fighting, and those who were not taken prisoners went home. The Indians also gave up. Two days after Middleton reached Battleford, Poundmaker and about fifteen of his chief followers rode in, Poundmaker, with all the dignity of a king, wearing a handsome cap of a cinnamon bear's head. The general sat in a camp chair in the open, and the red men squatted in a semi-circle before him with their chief in front.

Poundmaker made a long speech, in which he said that he knew little of what his men were doing, but that he had done his best to keep them quiet. One of the Indians then came up, crouched down before Middleton, and confessed to murdering a white man. Another followed his example and offered to be cut in little pieces, if only his wife and children would be spared. It was a very pathetic spectacle, which ended with the arrest of Poundmaker, some of his sub-chiefs, and the murderers. The others were allowed to return to their reserve.

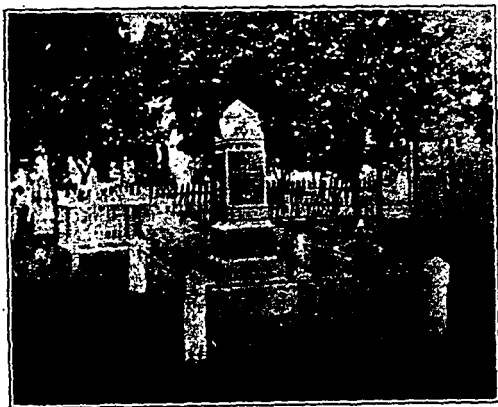
All that was left of the rebellion was Big Bear's band which was still at large. General Strange now came down the Saskatchewan after them. On the very day that Middleton entered Battleford, Strange's army reached Frog Lake, where they found the bodies of the massacred and gave them a decent burial.

Four days afterwards, these troops had a battle with the retreating Indians at Frenchman's Butte, some ten miles downstream from Fort Pitt. The result was rather amusing. After four hours of fighting, in which only three men were wounded, General Strange ordered his men to retire. He thought that



the Indians were going to defeat him, but he had actually defeated them, and they were running away. Soon the chase began again, the Indians flying northward. After a while, they were hunted so hotly that they dropped their prisoners. Then, realizing that they could not escape, they came down to the Saskatchewan and surrendered. Big Bear gave himself up at Fort Carlton on July 2nd.

The rebellion was over; the troops went home; and the prisoners were tried in Regina. Riel and eight Indians, including Wandering Spirit, were hanged; Big Bear and Poundmaker, along with several other red men, were sent to prison for a while. Imasees, who was as much responsible as Wandering Spirit for the Frog Lake massacre, escaped to the United States. After some years, he came back to Canada, and, in full



Riel's grave in the cemetery of St. Boniface.

war paint and feathers, he visited Ottawa and other eastern cities where he was received with great respect. Gabriel Dumont also returned after a while, but was less bold. He settled down to a quiet life at Batoche, where he died in the spring of 1906.

Looking back over the forty odd years which have passed since this rebellion, one wonders if the punishment dealt out was even justice. Was Riel really sane? Or should he not have been shut up in an asylum instead of being hanged? Should Poundmaker and Big Bear have gone to jail, when they

had done their utmost to keep their warriors from killing white men? Imasees, on the other hand, should certainly have swung at the end of a rope along with Wandering Spirit, instead of being hailed as a wonderful brave by respectable white men in Eastern Canada, as he was a few years later.

But these things often happen in history, because people give way to their natural feelings and cry out for vengeance, and then later they forget. Thus the story of the second Riel Rebellion has a sad lesson at the end of it.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### *Growing up and filling out.*

When Riel was laid in his grave, the past seemed to be buried with him. Gone were the days when the buffalo blackened the plains, and the Indians and the Métis hunted them at will. The red men were quietly living on their reserves, and the half-breeds were settling down on the river lots which the government now recognized as theirs. The prairies were empty as they had never been before—a rich land which only white men could really use. And now it was both possible and safe for white men to come. The railway had opened the doors of the country, and the crushing of the rebellion had proven that law and order were to reign here. The Canadian North-West was ready for a large population to take possession of it. But it was to wait for a dozen years and more before the full tide of humanity flowed in to fill its great open spaces.

During these years, some Eastern Canadians and a few people from overseas drifted in. From 1881 to 1891, the population of Manitoba increased from 62,260 to 152,506, and Winnipeg grew into a city of twenty-five thousand. But there was no such development in what is now Saskatchewan and Alberta. The first census of the North-West Territories, which was taken in 1881, gave a population of 56,446, including half-breeds. Ten years later, there were only ten thousand more people between Manitoba and the Rocky Mountains. Settlement was limited to a ribbon of land along the railway line, and to a few patches in the valley of the North Saskatchewan. Meanwhile, Europe was sending a swelling stream of emigrants across the Atlantic, and swarms of young men were leaving

their homes in Eastern Canada to seek their fortunes elsewhere. There were plenty of people migrating. Why did they not come to the West?

Some have said that the rebellion of 1885 was responsible. But the rebellion, perhaps, brought as many as it frightened away. The men who came out under General Middleton saw more of the country than they did of the rebels, and they



A scene near Calgary, looking towards the foot-hills.

liked what they saw. To many of these citizen soldiers, it was a great "Land of Promise." Some settled here right away; others went back only to persuade friends and relatives to join them in a peaceful conquest of the North-West.

Others have blamed the Canadian Pacific Railways' choice of the southern route. This carried the road through the upper end of the Great American Desert, which stretches all the way from Mexico. From Regina westward to near the mountains,

the average rainfall is less and less. Because of the lack of moisture, this territory was long considered unfit for farming. Therefore, it was given over to stock-raising, and for this purpose the government leased the land in huge blocks.

On either side of the railway, as far as the eye could see, there was nothing but bald prairie and an odd band of horses or cattle. Through winter and summer alike, they grazed at large, sometimes wandering over an area a hundred and fifty miles wide. Every spring, they were rounded up and sorted



A family of German immigrants.

out according to the marks burnt on their flanks. Following the custom in Montana, each ranch had its own brand, or distinguishing mark, which was registered by the government. The young that had been born since the previous spring ran with their mothers, and were now branded accordingly. But there were many strays, and no one could tell to whom they belonged. These "mavericks," as they were called, were sold to pay part of the expense of the "round-up." In the fall, there was another "round-up" to pick out and drive to the nearest railway station the stock that was to be sent to market.



The home on the prairie.

From a painting by E. Roper 1887.

All this work was done by cowboys, an interesting type of man now fast disappearing, though still to be seen as the hero of many a fair. With his wide-brimmed hat, his leather breeches, or chaps, and his high-heeled riding boots, a cowboy is a picturesque figure. His bowlegs and rolling gait suggest that he is more at home in the saddle than on his feet. Indeed, his chief pride is in being able to break the wildest broncho. He is also so skilful with the lariat, or lasso, that he can "rope" the friskiest steer in almost no time.

Ranching was an interesting life and a profitable business for those who owned the herds, but it meant that settlement was very thin. Had the railway followed the North Saskatchewan valley, as first planned, it would have opened up a country that has a rich soil and a plentiful rainfall. All along the line, there might have been farms instead of ranches, and people instead of cattle. But those who cannot forget what they call the great mistake of the Canadian Pacific should not forget that the railway paid for it.

The Canadian Pacific has also been criticized for not building many branch lines until a much later day. The first extension on the prairie was to Lethbridge. But this was to get coal out rather than to bring farmers in. By the end of 1892, the railway also had arms reaching to Prince Albert and Edmonton in the North, and to Estevan and Macleod in the south; and many people rushed through these new doors into the country. For example, three thousand settled between Calgary and Edmonton in 1893, just two years after the completion of the road, and even more went to the end of the line to take up land beyond. If many more such branches had been built, would not the country have developed more rapidly? The answer to this question depends on the answer to another. Were there, at this time, large numbers of people anxious to make their homes here? There may have been, but, as we shall see, there is reason for doubting it. A vigor-

ous pushing of branch lines in these early years might have brought more loss to the company than gain to the country.

Many have accused the government at Ottawa of holding up the development of the North-West by its land policy. The system of surveys was copied from the Western States,



A trick for a pot shot on the prairie. From a painting by E. Roper, 1887.

the unit being one square mile, or section, which was divided into quarters, or farms, of one hundred and sixty acres. In each township, a six-mile square, the sections were numbered from the south-east corner, back and forth along the ranges to the top. Number 8 and three-quarters of number 26 were given to the



Hudson's Bay Company to fulfil the promise of the Dominion when the company surrendered its claim of ownership, under the charter of 1670. The corresponding sections, 11 and 29, were set aside for the support of schools. Years passed, however, before the government finally decided what lands were to be open for homesteading. This uncertainty arose from the government's desire to pay for the construction of the railway by the sale of lands in the country that it was to serve. For a while, all sections within several miles of the main line were reserved, even though some people had already settled there. These reserves caused considerable trouble, because the people could get no titles to the land which they were farming. At last, all even-numbered sections, except those of the Hudson's Bay Company, were thrown open. But the rest, except the school lands, were reserved for railway purposes or for sale by the government.

The definite adoption of this regulation removed one cause of discontent. Homesteaders now knew where they could go. But another cause of discontent remained. The reserved sections were something like the clergy reserves had been in Upper Canada. They prevented solid settlement, and thus made it twice as hard to organize local government or school districts. But this only partly explains why the North-West was so slow in filling up. After a few years, the flood of immigrants commenced and continued in spite of these conditions which lasted until after the provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta were formed in 1905. Not until then was the Canadian Pacific made to select all the lands to which it had a right, so that the remaining sections might be opened for homestead entry. Some other explanation of the delay must, therefore, be found.

Again and again, the history of Canada has been deeply affected by what was happening in the United States, for geography has tied these two countries together. After the

Civil War, the United States grew enormously. As air rushes into a vacuum, people rushed to the free lands of the West. The new riches which they produced quickened the life of the older states. They did it in many different ways, such as enlarging the demand for manufactures. Thus, the population and the wealth of the whole country, east and west, increased by leaps and bounds. No country has ever been more prosperous than was the United States in the latter part of the last century, and there is nothing which attracts immigrants more than a prosperous country. From the Old World, a tremendous human tide poured into the towns and on to the land of our great neighbour. The tide was so strong that it pulled in many of the youth of Eastern Canada. Like water, it was bound to flow on until something stopped it, and, therefore, very little found its way up to the Canadian prairies. But ten years before the close of the nineteenth century, the United States government granted the last of its free lands, and then a change occurred. As the building of a dam causes the waters of a river to rise and overflow its banks, the disappearance of those free lands forced the human tide to back up and pour into this country.

It must not be imagined, however, that the North-West Territories were standing still for a quarter of a century after they became part of Canada. They were like a youth who grows up before he fills out. The story of this growing up is the story of how the people came to govern themselves.

The inhabitants of Manitoba, because it was a province, began to govern themselves at once in 1870; but those of the western plains did not. They were governed by a lieutenant-governor and a council who were appointed by the governor-general and received their instructions from Ottawa. Moreover, this government was not even in the country which it governed; it sat in Winnipeg, because the lieutenant-governor was also the lieutenant-governor of Manitoba and most of the councillors

likewise resided in that province. To-day, this seems a most unsatisfactory arrangement, but it did not last long, and it must be remembered that there were only a very few settlers in the Territories, and these were scattered over a very large area.



Government House, Winnipeg, 1876.

In 1875, the Dominion Parliament passed the North-West Territories Act, which created a distinct government for the Territories. This Act came into force in the fall of 1876, with the appointment of the first separate lieutenant-governor. This was David Laird. He was a native of Prince Edward Island, and, as minister of the interior at Ottawa, had been responsible for the administration of the Territories from 1873. The new

council, composed of three members besides the lieutenant-governor, all appointed by the Dominion government, held its first meeting in March, 1877, at Livingstone, Swan River. This was the temporary capital until the following year, when the government buildings at Battleford were finished. From Battleford, as we have seen, the capital was moved to Pile of Bones Creek, or Regina, in 1883, when the railway was built.

The Act of 1875 provided for the gradual change of this council in size and character as the population grew. As soon as there were a thousand adult white people in any district of not more than a thousand square miles, they were to elect a member to be added to the council. In 1881, the country around Prince Albert became the first electoral district, and Lawrence Clarke of Fort Carlton was chosen as the first popular representative in the council, or government, of the Territories. He was one of the few Irishmen who entered the service of the Hudson's Bay Company.

By 1884, the appointed members were increased to six, but meanwhile they were outnumbered by the elected members. From 1883 to 1886, thirteen were added, making fourteen in all. This was due to the immigration that accompanied the building of the Canadian Pacific. According to the Act of 1875, the addition of elected members was to continue until there were twenty-two of them. Then the appointed members were to disappear, and the council was to become a legislative assembly. The Dominion government, however, decided to hasten the new day by another North-West Territories Act. This was passed in 1888 and came into force immediately, creating an assembly of twenty-two elected members.

The political history of the North-West Territories during these and the few following years is of great interest, because it presents a close parallel with the earlier struggle for responsible government in the older parts of Canada. Again the elected representatives of the people objected more and more strongly

to the interference of outside authority. Again the outside authority, now the government in Ottawa instead of the government in Britain, was reluctant to give up its right of control.

The struggle commenced during the first session in Regina in 1883, and grew with the number of the elected members. From 1888, it became acute,—a natural result of the change from council to assembly. The lieutenant-governor was a member of the council as long as it lasted, and, therefore, he presided over its meetings and had considerable influence upon its decisions. But he was not a member of the assembly, and, therefore, that body elected its own presiding officer, or speaker. Thus were the assembly and the lieutenant-governor set over against each other, and it was impossible for them to agree. The former was composed of representatives of the people who wished to govern themselves, and the latter was appointed by the Dominion to govern the territories according to instructions prepared in Ottawa.

Their dispute was focused upon the question of finance. It cost a great deal to govern the country, but the Dominion Parliament allowed the assembly very little power of collecting taxes. Therefore, most of the money had to come from the Canadian government. The assembly asserted its right to decide how this money was to be spent, while the government at Ottawa insisted upon controlling it through the lieutenant-governor.

In 1891, the Dominion government yielded, and Parliament passed an Act giving the assembly the right to do as it wished with these funds. This meant that the Territories now had a large measure of responsible government. Six years later, Parliament passed another important Act. The ordinary business of government in the Territories was carried on by a committee. The members of this committee were chosen from the assembly, but they were selected by the lieutenant-governor and were

responsible to him. The majority of the assembly, however, insisted that they should control the selection and the actions of this committee, which was really the government. The Act of 1897 gave what the majority of the assembly wanted. Thenceforth, the executive committee, as it had been called, became an executive council, which is the legal name of a



The Alberta homesteader—pioneer conditions. From a painting in the Palliser Hotel, Calgary.

provincial cabinet. At last, the government was completely chosen by the people and responsible to them.

Meanwhile, the land was beginning to fill up more rapidly. During the last decade of the century, 200,000 people came in. Half of them made their homes in Manitoba. By the census of 1901, that province had a population of over 255,000, while that of the whole country beyond was nearly 100,000 less. It may

seem surprising that the North-West Territories, which were many times the size of Manitoba, had many fewer settlers, but it was very natural. Manitoba was the older country; it was much nearer the outside world; and it was more covered by railways, for there was considerable building there during the nineties. As long as there was room for them, many newcomers



The Alberta homesteader—four years' effort. From a painting in the Palliser Hotel, Calgary.

preferred to stop off in Manitoba. This general condition of thicker settlement to the east continued for a long time. Not until after the Great War was there anything like an even distribution of population over all the prairie that was fit for farming.

From the closing years of the century, a rapid change came over the whole of the Canadian North-West. It began to fill up with a rush. The main reason, as we have seen, was the

disappearance of free homesteads in the United States. This caused land to leap in value. In 1898, farms in Iowa were selling at sixty dollars an acre, nearly double the price of 1890. This was typical of what was happening all over the middle Western States. This rapid rise in value made it much



A Polish family living near Winnipeg.

more difficult for young people there to set up in life for themselves, and, therefore, they grew restless. At the same time, the Dominion government opened immigration offices in those states, inserted advertisements in their papers, and brought many farmers on excursions to see this wonderful land which was to be given away to all who would use it.



This tempting offer drew many young people. It also attracted many older folk, who sold their farms at a profit. Why should they work expensive land when they could get just as good here for nothing? Soon the tide began flowing from the south, and it continued to flow in increasing volume down to the eve of the Great War. These Americans made excellent settlers. They had been living on the American prairie where conditions were much the same as here, and, therefore, they were at home right away. Most of them also brought sufficient money to give them a good beginning in their new homes. Moreover, many of them brought something else which was extremely valuable—dry farming methods. These enabled them to turn to much more profitable use the land which had been given over to ranching. A few people feared that this "American invasion" would Americanize the country, but it did not. Being of the same stock as Canadians, they were quickly assimilated.

Also, just as the free lands disappeared in the United States, the stream of European immigration was being drawn more from the plains of South-Eastern Europe. These immigrants had been peasants with very small farms, and they wanted big ones. The American door was closing, but the Canadian door was wide open. They rushed in, Ruthenians and Poles from the Austrian province of Galicia, Ukrainians from the neighbouring district of Russia and Doukhobors from farther east.

In their industry and their hunger for land, they resembled the Americans. Otherwise, they were a striking contrast. They spoke strange tongues; they dressed in sheepskin coats; and they had little money. Though poor and in a strange land, they were able to look after themselves. One illustration will show how they managed. When the Doukhobors arrived in 1899, the first thing that they did was to buy leather and iron bars. Many of them were at once busy cutting up leather for

harness. They also made a bellows out of the leather and an anvil with some iron bars. They manufactured rough bricks out of the clay in the neighbourhood, and with these bricks they built an oven to make charcoal for the forge. Then their blacksmiths set to, turning out spades, wagon tires, and other necessary articles that they could not afford to buy.

These "strangers within our gates," of various nationalities, naturally tended to herd together and to live much as they had done in their old homes across the sea. They dwelt in mud shacks, where pigs, chickens, and children seemed to be all mixed up together. This raised a problem in some people's minds. Would they become Canadians? Could they? Time is answering that question, as the older folk have been building real houses



A Mennonite mother and daughter.

to replace the little shacks, as the young people have been learning to speak English, and all have more prosperity and freedom than they ever had before.

From the end of the century, this marvellous movement of people was greatly assisted by the railways, for the Canadian Northern and the Grand Trunk Pacific, since amalgamated to the Canadian National Railways, made their appearance beside the Canadian Pacific. They thrust out lines everywhere to cover the country with a network of steel. They were doing something very like what the irrigation farmer does when he digs ditches all over his land to spread the water over it. Instead of ditches, they laid rails, and instead of water they spread a human flood over the country. The prairie was no longer empty. Towns sprang up like mushrooms in the midst of thriving communities.

The railways did more than help the people in and their produce out. Many poor immigrants would have drifted away, if the railways had not helped them to strike roots in the soil. In those days of rapid railway building, there was a great



A farm near Fort Vermilion, in the Peace River District.

demand for manual labour. Here was a chance for the poorest man who had a sound body and a will to work. Much of the money that was paid as wages to the construction gangs that swarmed like ants on the prairie was soon used by many of these human ants to make themselves independent farmers, owning their own land, their own agricultural implements, and their own livestock.

During those wonderful years, Eastern Canadians woke up, as never before, to realise that they had a great heritage in this western country. The old drain to the United States dried up, and a new stream poured west. From town and country, they

came to make new homes and greater fortunes in this larger land. Then in the British Isles, the newspapers began to talk about the Canadian North-West. They prodded people with fear, and they stirred them with hope, to come out and settle here. Britishers could thus save a British country from being "Americanized," and at the same time make for themselves a future that was denied them at home. Now the Canadian government multiplied its immigration offices in the British Isles, and told the people there of the unlimited opportunities in this "land of open doors." Thus a new stream arose and poured into this country.

In the midst of this great rush into a half empty land, two very interesting ceremonies took place in Regina and Edmonton, now grown into real cities. Bugles and bands and speeches all proclaimed the birth of two great twins on September 1st, 1905, for the Dominion Parliament had passed two Acts creating the provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta. This country had come of age.

While men, women, and children made merry in the new capitals, Regina and Edmonton, others were busy in the fields, gathering a bountiful harvest, and the trains were rolling in, bearing the ever-growing army of immigrants. So does this romance of the Prairie Provinces close with the greatest romance of all. It is the romance of a multitude of people who have left for ever their homes in other parts of the world, and commenced life all over again in a new country which they are making and which is making them.

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